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CONTENTS

NOTES OF THE WEEK ... 637

LEADING ARTICLE:

Unemployment ... 640

MIDDLE ARTICLES:

The Comedy of Westminster ... 641

Obscenity and the Censor. By

Havelock Ellis ... 642

Agoraphobia: or the Future of

Cambridge. From Our Own

Correspondent ... 643

A Great Biographer. By Ham-

ilton Fyfe ... 644

Max and Morals. By Gerald

Gould ... 645

Lord Mayor Unvisited. By

J. B. Priestley ... 647

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR 648

THE FILMS:

The Insane Root. By Ivor

Brown ... 649

LITERARY COMPETITIONS:

Set by Martin Armstrong ... 650

BACK NUMBERS—XCIX ... 652

REVIEWS:

John Ruskin. By Christopher

Hollis ... 653

Franz Schubert and His Times

Franz Schubert's Letters and

Other Writings ... 654

Schubert's Songs ... 654

Music and Letters ... 654

The Art of the Cave-Dweller 655

REVIEWS—continued

The Learned Knife ... 656

Three Plays ... 656

Hoppla ... 656

Empire Government ... 657

Selected Poems of Swinburne 658

NEW FICTION. By L. P. Hartley

The Pathway ... 658

The Closed Garden ... 658

Humdrum ... 658

Joseph and his Brethren ... 658

SHORTER NOTICES ... 661

NEW BOOKS AT A GLANCE 662

ACROSTICS ... 663

THE CITY ... 664

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NOTES OF THE WEEK

IT is inevitable that the local Government Bill should occasion a good deal of sectional criticism, even where it is understood. A measure so complex could not please everybody. But it stands in far less danger of damaging criticism from those who honestly disapprove of it for one reason or another than from people who seize upon the general ignorance of its complicated provisions to misrepresent it. The thoughtless attacks being made upon the Bill by so-called Conservative newspapers may well cause the Government to pray to be delivered from their friends. Constructive criticism in detail can safely be left until more time has been afforded for digestion of the Bill's 115 clauses and 12 schedules: even the explanatory Memorandum issued with the text is an involved document. Already a good deal has been done since the principles of the Bill were first outlined to meet local objections; much more can be done and no doubt will be done when it is taken in Committee.

The broad lines of the Bill are quite plain. The Government's decision to relieve the productive industries of 75 per cent. of rates makes imperative a redistribution of local government organization which was in any event considerably overdue. As so large a proportion of the resources of existing units of administration is by the de-rating scheme to be cut away it becomes necessary to remove the burden of certain forms of local expenditure on to wider shoulders. The most convenient bodies to undertake these responsibilities are the county councils, and accordingly poor law administration and highway powers in rural and urban districts are to be transferred to county councils. But in order that the advantages of close personal touch such as was maintained under the Boards of Guardians may not be lost, part of the personnel of existing Boards of Guardians is to be employed on special county council committees formed to administer the poor laws. Similarly, district councils will be free to apply for the delegation of highway powers from the county councils. To cover the loss on de-rating, local areas will receive a block-grant from the Exchequer which will



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take the place of the existing grants-in-aid. The sum to be so paid will be reviewed every five years, and local authorities are guaranteed that the total shall never fall below the amount lost in rates and grants.

The danger is that the personal and local effects of the Bill will be fastened on, to the neglect of its total national purpose. The instance of Sir Walter Preston, the new member for Cheltenham, is one example: there will be several Cheltenhams. Not unnaturally there is some apprehension lest the consumer should once more be called upon to foot the bill for the producer, and hostile statisticians are busy, on insufficient data, proving that seaside landladies and retired professional men will find their rates increased to cover the relief to industry. If this should prove to be true the Bill will not be particularly popular, especially in the South, nor even, we suppose, with the unfortunate Conservative M.P.s who represent the constituencies thus affected. But that is hardly the point. The de-rating scheme is a definite and courageous attempt to help industry and lessen unemployment and is a constructive alternative to Protection, and the only way to judge it fairly is to see it whole. So seen it looks to be a really big measure of reform.

President Coolidge's Armistice Day speech contrasts unfavourably with Mr. Baldwin's recent pronouncements on foreign affairs, and especially with his remarkable references to the Kellogg Pact at the Guildhall. It is natural that Europeans, who spent Armistice Day in mourning their dead, should find it difficult to sympathize with Mr. Coolidge's picture of American financial sufferings during the war. Nor do the figures the American President gave of the naval strength of our respective countries seem to us quite fair; these annual attempts to draw a contrast between the political ethics of the United States and Europe are obviously more likely to please on the other side of the Atlantic. But the fact that the speech did appeal to Americans is of importance to us, since we have to deal with people as they are and not as we might wish them to be. There is no probability that Mr. Hoover will be even as tolerant of European weaknesses as is the present occupant of White House.

The speech is above all valuable on account of its frankness. It is clear that, despite Lord Cushendun's frequently expressed surprise that anybody should have misunderstood the high motives which led to the Anglo-French compromise, President Coolidge, for one, felt a further attempt was being made to thrust the responsibility for the failure of the Three-Power Naval Conference on to American shoulders. If the American people feel this way, it is just as well their official spokesman should have expressed their feelings frankly. Obviously the Navy Bill, which has already been passed by Congress and will shortly come before the Senate, will now be made law with a rapidity which will encourage cynics to declare that the Kellogg Pact is mere hypocrisy. But this Bill would probably have been passed anyhow, and any attempt to saddle the French and British

Governments with the responsibility for it is possibly legitimate from the party point of view, but cannot be defended on wider international grounds.

Everyone now admits that the Anglo-French compromise was a big tactical blunder: nothing should have been done which could possibly increase the suspicions left by the failure of the Three-Power Naval Conference. But the blunder may yet prove to have been a blessing in disguise, for the Government will be less ready than heretofore to accept Admiralty or War Office advice uninfluenced by wider political considerations. At the new conference for the reduction of armaments, which, it is alleged, Mr. Hoover proposes to call as soon as he comes into power, or at the next meeting of the League's Preparatory Disarmament Commission early in 1929, British delegates will be more disposed to accept any scheme which, without endangering our national safety, furthers the ideal behind the Kellogg Pact. Mr. Baldwin, in his speech in the House of Commons on Tuesday, pointed out that many of the misunderstandings between Europe and the United States were due to the lack of personal contact such as results between European statesmen who meet periodically in Geneva. Could he, or even Sir Austen Chamberlain, have direct conversations with Mr. Kellogg, Mr. Coolidge, or Mr. Hoover, most of the misunderstandings which tend to poison relations between London and Washington would disappear.

The solution of the political crisis in France should leave M. Poincaré thoroughly satisfied. Many of his friends criticized him because he did not turn the Radical-Socialists out of his Government after the great gains of the Parties of the Right at the general elections last April. By waiting until the Radical-Socialists themselves brought about a crisis, he has put an end to the paradoxical situation caused by facing a Chamber of the Right with a Ministry of the Left. There are now no Radical-Socialists in the Government, much to the distress of certain members of that Party, who are furious with the Caillaux Wing of it for their behaviour at the National Conference at Angers. By offering minor concessions to the Left, M. Poincaré is very cleverly encouraging civil war in the Radical-Socialist ranks between those who would like to slip back into office at the first opportunity and those who hold that an Opposition Party should oppose. It would not be surprising if M. Herriot and some of his friends were to break away and the Left Wing of the Republican Socialists were to combine with the Socialist Party to form a new *Cartel des Gauches*.

It will be noted that M. Poincaré has left the Ministry of Finance. This is a welcome indication of his confidence in the stability of the franc and, at the same time, evidence of his intention to play a more active part in foreign affairs than he has done in his earlier governments. M. Briand's position will be made still more difficult by such interventions, but the German Press as a whole accepts the prospect of dealing with M. Poincaré direct much more philosophically than

might have been expected. Berlin has never forgiven M. Briand for his unnecessarily brusque reply to Dr. Müller, the Chancellor, during the League Assembly in September. It is generally felt that since men with international minds, such as Stresemann and Briand, have not succeeded in bringing about the evacuation of the Rhineland it might be as well to negotiate with Poincaré, who is looked upon as being the most French of all Frenchmen, and who, for his own purposes, would like to see the reparation problem settled.

Dr. Maniu, the leader of the National Peasant Party in Rumania, has successfully resisted the attempt of the Regency to bring a Coalition Ministry into being, and has formed his own Government amid a wave of popular enthusiasm such as Bucarest has never before known. New general elections are to take place next month, and if means of preventing the Liberal Party machine from falsifying the results can be found the new Government should have a substantial majority. Dr. Maniu will have a difficult task ahead of him, for most of his colleagues are inexperienced whereas his rival, M. Vintila Bratianu, knows more about political intrigue than any other man in Europe. Two features which should ensure the new Government's popularity abroad are the steps that will be taken to encourage foreign industrial enterprises and the probability that the long-standing quarrel with Hungary over Transylvanian optants will be settled—for Dr. Maniu and three of his colleagues themselves used to sit in the Hungarian Parliament, and do not share Bucarest's fanatical hatred of Budapest.

In a letter we published last week, a correspondent drew attention to a paragraph in our issue of October 27 which gave the impression that, whereas the United States, Germany and certain other Powers telegraphed congratulations when the Chinese Constitution was promulgated, the British Government did not. We took our information from the Shanghai Correspondent of *The Times*, whose telegram, published on October 11, stated that "messages of congratulation have been received from President Coolidge, the Dutch Minister, and the French and German Chargés d'Affaires," and we are happy to learn that, although nothing which could be compared with the personal message from President Coolidge was sent to Nanking on behalf of our Government, the British Minister in China did, in fact, send his own personal good wishes. Such an action is one we should expect from Sir Miles Lampson, whose tact in a very difficult situation is worthy of the highest praise. Our correspondent would be mistaken if he supposed that this REVIEW criticized the British Government's past policy in China. On many occasions we have suggested that the Foreign Secretary deserves greater credit for this policy than for anything else he has achieved since he has been in office, except possibly the conclusion of the Locarno Agreements. Great Britain, however, to be consistent, must shortly recognize the Nanking Government, and it is satisfactory to learn from Mr. Locker Lampson's reply in the House of Commons on Wednesday last that

recognition will automatically follow the successful conclusion of negotiations for a treaty on tariff matters which are now in progress.

Dr. Davidson—Baron Davidson of Lambeth—relinquished at midnight on Monday the office of Primate of All England. For more than twenty-five years of peculiar difficulty and strain he upheld his position with tact, dignity, patience, grasp, humanity—in a word, with great statesmanship. More than that, he succeeded despite the controversies of the times in immeasurably strengthening the prestige of the Primacy. Some notion of the respect and devotion which the Church, irrespective of "party," has for him may be gauged from the tributes which have been showered upon him even by those who in recent events have not agreed with his policy. The difficulties of his successor will be many, but they need not prove insurmountable if they are met with the statesmanship that has marked the reign of "Archbishop Davidson"—the name by which the retiring Archbishop wishes to be known. Everyone will wish him and Lady Davidson happiness and peace in the years of retirement.

The Government are obdurate about Oscar Slater. He has had an *ex gratia* grant, and that is the end of the matter. We are assured in vague terms that all the circumstances were taken into consideration when the grant was made: why cannot we be told what proportion of it was supposed to be compensatory? Let it be admitted that pecuniary compensation for such suffering as long imprisonment on an unsound conviction cannot be accurately calculated; common sense still suggests that the grant should at least exceed the legal costs of the victim in his endeavour at rehabilitation. The grant is not described as meeting his costs; it is not described at all, except as adequate in view of all the unspecified circumstances. Questions about it are resented, and Oscar Slater has no redress. We must ask again how much longer it will be before the subject is enabled to secure redress when wronged by the Crown.

The extremely sensational stories told by some of the survivors of the wreck of the *Vestris* lack confirmation at the moment of writing, but even if it should prove that they are to a great extent the products of shock and strain there will be matter enough for investigation. It is the experience of all who have had much to do with the sea that crews composed of several nationalities do not in a crisis work as well as homogeneous crews. That may be part of the explanation of the aggravated disaster. One lifeboat is alleged to have had a hole in it before launching; others are said to have been launched in such a way as to suffer damage; and the occupants of some are reported to have ignored strugglers in the water who could have been rescued. Over all is the question whether the Captain, who went to his end gallantly, was unduly reluctant to issue a call for help. As regards this, it must be remembered that there have been recent instances of premature or totally unnecessary S.O.S. messages, and that he may have been determined not to share in the blame that has fallen on their senders.

UNEMPLOYMENT

NO doctor ever cured a disease and no Government ever cured unemployment, or ever will. All that either doctor or Government can do is to create conditions that may help the patient to cure himself, and among those conditions are what is called a good bedside manner. The present Government have not a particularly good bedside manner, and in consequence the country is restless and lacks the confidence which is necessary for the curative processes of its natural body. The coming election is going to turn on unemployment, but not in the sense that the voters will indicate a preference for one course of physic rather than another. If there is one fact that comes out clearly from the repeated debates on unemployment, it is that no party has a sovereign specific to offer.

One can indeed always cure a disease by killing the patient. Whole-hogging Protection or Free Trade or Socialism would each have a chance of doing that with more or less expedition, and it follows that no party has any distinctive doctrine of its own that is really relevant to the matter in hand. Obviously unemployment in many trades could be cured by a prohibitive tariff, but only at the risk of impairing the general health. Again, work of a sort could be found for everyone in a Socialist state, but the objection to unemployment is poverty and we merely increase and redistribute poverty by finding more work at greater loss. By the simple process of cancelling the national debt, and so cutting expenditure as to bring back the 100 millions budget, our export industries might be placed at their old competitive advantage with the rest of the world, but the remedy would be like cutting a man's head off to cure his neuralgia. The problem of unemployment is not one of applying any party principle, but of giving the nation such a degree of confidence that everything possible is being done that trade and industry may fight their way to recovery. It was the George Stephensons and the textile inventors, not the politicians, who converted the distress of the generation after Waterloo into the abounding prosperity of the next.

The Government have got hold of the right ideas but they seem incapable of presenting them in a form that will strike the imagination of the people. Mr. Churchill's idea of redressing the balance between production and distribution is a great one and there was a moment when it seemed likely to carry the country. After all, if unemployment is measured by mere bulk, it is not worse now than it has been in the past, and the amount of actual suffering is immeasurably less than it was before the insurance and other social legislation that the present Government has extended and improved. As Mr. Baldwin pointed out long ago, what makes the present unemployment seem so much worse than past crises is its concentration in certain geographical areas and industries. Leave out the coal industry and the country as a whole is not distressed, for the weakness of the textile trades is balanced by quite remarkable progress in other trades. There has been an unwholesome

transference of profits from the productive to the distributive trades, from the competitive industries at the fighting front to the sheltered industries at home, and Mr. Churchill's idea of checking that process is a bigger one than perhaps even he himself yet realizes. But it seems likely to be smothered under an immense mass of detail, and the complications of the new Bill are the worst possible platform on which to make a broad popular appeal. Something must be done to simplify the issue if the great object of all Government legislation on unemployment—the restoration of the patient's belief in his own power to get better—is not to be defeated.

Contrast this vast complicated measure written by experts for experts with the programme of Mr. Lloyd George as expounded by him in the unemployment debate of last week. Analyse his prescriptions closely and there is nothing in them. His project of a 200 millions loan for more roads depends for its validity on a view of the future of road transport which would make the railway tracks obsolete and promises no genuine addition to the wealth of the country; in any case the Government have a programme of expenditure on roads which amounts to 60 millions. Moreover, the project is not so much a cure of unemployment as a preparation for the good times that are coming; that is to say, for the times when trade has improved itself. But there is no doubt that before an election audience Mr. Lloyd George's proposals and his confident presentation of them would attract, while the proposals of the new Government legislation would perplex and repel. The reason is that they are specific and concrete and better calculated to assist the faith necessary for the success of natural curative processes. To sustain the country's faith in its own powers of recuperation is perhaps the best contribution that the Government can make to the problem of unemployment.

If the Government are wise they will get the new Bill off the floor of the House into Committee as soon as possible and give every scrap of available time in Parliament and in the country to re-establishing faith in their own constructive ability. They have a splendid case and if it has not yet impressed the country as it should it is because so far it has been presented piecemeal and without any clear and consistent philosophy as a background. One can imagine the case being put in a way that would sweep the country. First, it should be made clear that no Government can do more than put industry in the way of curing its own troubles, and that all who pretend to have a cure are impostors. The argument might go on to show that while the trouble is not peculiar to our own country, no other country has done anything like so much to smoothe over the difficult economic transitions of our time and to diminish the amount of suffering. The present Government are honourably distinguished by their sympathy with the weak and have done an immense amount of work in extending and improving insurance legislation for which they have not yet received the credit they deserve. It is due mainly to Conservative and Liberal legislation that the suffering caused by the present unemployment is almost wholly mental, not physical, and that the unemployed

man to-day is physically, thanks to humane legislation, better off than many employed men a generation ago.

Before the coal stoppage the broad humanity of Mr. Baldwin's administration was generally acknowledged, and the events of that time obscured but did not obliterate its beneficent record. Moreover, though the actual constructive schemes of the Government have not been spectacular, their cumulative effect has been considerable and a much stronger case can be made out than has yet been presented. Too often they have been overwhelmed in masses of detail which prevent the broad outlines from being defined. And finally the new de-rating proposals should be presented rather as a great common effort for a national object than as a series of difficult reforms in that most complicated of all subjects, local finance.

The supreme national object is the reinforcement of our competitive industrial front, for if we lose our power of competition in the open markets of the world the population and the power of this country must inevitably decline. That object is one to which even Cheltenham and the Home Counties may well be asked to contribute. As a project of local government and rating reform it may make no appeal. As a great patriotic measure for strengthening our heavy competitive industries it will. M. Poincaré recently converted what in effect divided the value of capital by one-fifth into a great patriotic campaign. What he did for the franc this Government can do for British heavy industries.

THE COMEDY OF WESTMINSTER

House of Commons, Thursday

THE last session of a Parliament which will virtually have run its statutory course has begun with members thinking more of the forthcoming General Election than of any immediate crisis. It remains to be seen whether the attempt, for which the Labour Party has been most noticeably responsible, to introduce a more competitive flavour into its proceedings will enliven its closing months.

A good deal of cheering and counter-cheering greeted the introduction of the victors of the by-elections held during the recess. The return of Captain Wedgwood Benn after his metamorphosis from Liberal member for Leith to Labour member for Aberdeen means something more than a change of position from below to above the gangway. He is a subtler Parliamentary tactician than Labour have yet possessed, and his dialectical abilities may help to prevent so many debates from degenerating into a succession of monologues. The Labour Amendment to the Address on Unemployment occupied all Thursday, Friday and Monday, and was predominantly a front-bench affair. Mr. Clynes is too mild a controversialist to impart much momentum to a debate, but in any case Mr. Churchill, who followed him, was not out to score mere debating points, and, after exposing the weakness of an entirely critical and unconstructive speech, settled down to a comprehensive survey of economic policy. Such soberness of utterance is unusual in the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but by deliberately casting aside the exuberances of fancy with which a natural delicacy no doubt impels him usually to clothe the naked facts he probably succeeded

the more in impressing the House with the substantiality of the Government's contributions to the solution of the problems of trade and employment. Mr. Runciman at any rate was unable to find any damaging retort. He enrolled himself with the band of Job's comforters who, like Mr. Clynes and other members of both Oppositions, seem to think that a studied pessimism will induce the electorate to share their own professed belief that whatever the Conservative Party does is wrong. For this negative attitude Sir Robert Horne very properly took him to task.

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On Friday Mr. Snowden resumed the Opposition's attempt to create an atmosphere of alarm and despondency, but although he disputed some of the figures used by Mr. Churchill the day before, and belittled the Government's efforts all he could, he did not deliver himself with his accustomed virulence. His affirmation that it is not the Opposition's business to make constructive suggestions may have been necessitated by the divergent views known to be held within the Labour Party itself but only made his case sound the lamer. It enhanced the convincingness of Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland's subsequent detailed exposition of the activities of the Ministry of Labour, and then gave Mr. Lloyd George a chance of explaining the superiority of a party which had produced a whole library of proposals. The leader of the Liberal Party has indeed seldom been in better form, and his picture of a restored English countryside, drained, afforested and tilled by a new peasantry drawn from the stagnant backwaters of industry could not but make its appeal.

The only fly in the ointment was a conception of finance more plausible than sound. It may be true that a high price has been paid for the level to which national credit has been raised by the return to the gold standard, but, as Mr. Boothby at once pointed out, the wisdom of dissipating the advantages accruing from this policy by borrowings which would involve inflation on a grand scale is not only questionable but is actually questioned even by Liberal experts. The temptation to gamble in this way with the nation's resources is obvious, but the risk of staking the country's whole economic future on one throw can hardly be taken unless it is reduced to more favourable odds than at present hold. The debate was brought to a close on Monday, mainly with recapitulations of ground already covered, the most original contribution being that of Captain Waterhouse, who urged the necessity of lowering cost of production and explained how he thought it could be done without reducing wages.

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The Labour Party chose Safeguarding for the closing debate on the Address on Wednesday in the hope of stirring up the differences which exist within the Conservative Party on this subject. Their only achievement, however, was to evoke a statement from the Government which made it clearer than ever that no substantial change of policy is to be expected and to call attention to the fissure between their own Free Traders and the new school of import prohibitionists. The House enjoys these occasions because Mr. Snowden always baits Sir Henry Page Croft, the leader of the group of "whole hoggers," and the latter never fails to give good sport. That agriculture is waking up to the fact that protection for everyone

but itself would scarcely be to its advantage was made patent by Sir Robert Saunders. So long, however, as the Government stands firm by the position which the Prime Minister expounded once more and with even greater emphasis, there is little danger of this issue becoming critical.

FIRST CITIZEN

OBSCENITY AND THE CENSOR

By HAVELOCK ELLIS

'TO THE PURE' is the title of a book—with the sub-title 'A Study of Obscenity and the Censor'—just published in New York by the Viking Press. At the outset let me say that it is a title which, however useful as a label, contains implications we do not all accept. By this we mean no disrespect to St. Paul, for when he uttered the famous dictum, "To the pure all things are pure," he was not discussing literature or pictures or the cinema, but a matter to which they are hardly analogous. There are many things in books and art generally which the pure may be justified in not feeling to be pure, although there can never be any agreement as to which things these are. That indeed is one of the solid and permanent arguments against a censorship of "obscurity."

Fortunately it is only as a label that the authors of this book have chosen their title. They are two American lawyers, Morris Ernst and William Seagle, and between them they represent an active interest in both law and literature. Their collaboration has proved singularly fortunate. They are not only able to speak with authority of legal conditions in England and America—for the book is as much concerned with England as America—but they are extremely well informed in literature, and with a sufficiently adequate critical and æsthetic equipment for estimating literary values. The book is at once a competent history of the Anglo-Saxon censorship from the Victorian period until to-day, and at the same time a cogent and yet singularly temperate argument for freedom from censorship. It is not the first book which has taken this standpoint. There is, for instance, also from America, the substantial and powerful work of Theodore Schroeder, published some twenty years ago, on 'Obscene Literature and Constitutional Law.' But that book was hardly written for the general reader and it remains less well known than it deserves to be. 'To the Pure . . .' is undoubtedly by far the best popular book—the best written as well as the most persuasive—that has yet appeared on this subject. And since it is a subject that concerns us here to-day at least as much as it concerns Americans, the sooner it is published here the better.

I have referred to the tone of the book as temperate. We have too often seen the slapdash hand exercising itself in this field. The foolish and extravagant rhetoric of those who fulminate against "obscurity" has been matched by the random and reckless smartness, sometimes scarcely less foolish, of those who took the other side. It was fully time to approach the question in a sane and serious spirit, which is not less so for allowing the play of wit and humour. Thus it is notable that these authors do not, as was not so long ago the fashion, howl over the supposed misdeeds of "Puritanism." They know that real Puritanism was on the side of liberty, and that it was the greatest of the Puritans who in the 'Areopagitica' put forth the noblest denunciation of censorship that was ever uttered. It might be added that even in more recent days the most genuinely Puritanic of prominent publicists, W. T. Stead, was prepared to raise his voice for those haled before the courts for "obscurity," and was in fact himself once among them.

It is, indeed, well known that the Bible takes a high place among "obscene" books. There appears

to be no definition of obscenity which will not condemn the Bible. Moreover, on the practical side, it is also known that the young find their chief source of information concerning sex—birth, masturbation, birth-control, rape, and perversion—from the Bible. This was, for instance, shown not long ago through a careful enquiry by a distinguished authority in social hygiene, Dr. Katharine Davis, among over a thousand unmarried women, all college graduates. The same women were also asked what they found most "sexually stimulating" (in the police courts it would be phrased "lewd, filthy, and disgusting"). The largest number replied "Man." The problem thus becomes of tragic consequence, for we see that if "obscurity" is to be suppressed it can only be done by the extinction of one-half of the human race. And as men, if asked the same question, would in an equal majority of cases undoubtedly answer: "Woman"—why, there goes the other half.

The authors of this book are not joking but they are concerned to show that the final refutation of the criminal obscenity laws lies in their futility. They are throughout dealing with the actual facts of life and of law in our own day; they marshal these facts with learning and with care (in spite of a few curious misprints); and their conclusions are logical, sober, and irresistible. They claim to have shown the necessity for a *reevaluation of obscenity*. That is very far from meaning a justification of the things that most reasonable people find ugly and unpleasant. But it means a different attitude towards their suppression in practice. We know the results of the attitude which has prevailed in the past. We have all been the victims of it. A premium is put on things that are dirty and worthless. It is law alone which makes pornography both attractive and profitable. A simple-minded Home Secretary arises and declares that he feels it to be his duty to protect the young from the awful dangers that threaten them in books, postcards, and cinemas. Needless to say, the young of to-day are not in a mood to be preserved from these dangers, which can always be reached sooner or later, with a little trouble and money. And no doubt such things often give rise to some gloating, though in the absence of the alluring taboo they would call forth only indifference or dislike. The motive for producing them would then soon disappear. At the present time, thanks to the premium put on them, the production of obscene postcards and similar things is so large that even the number of those seized by the police soon mounts up to millions. All of us, it is probable, have once been stirred to gain access to such things simply because they were forbidden. For my own part, I remember how, long ago, in a quiet street of Seville, a furtive and shabby individual drew me aside and produced from beneath his long cloak a little book with coloured illustrations which curiosity induced me to spend several pesetas in buying. I found it pathetically crude and unpleasant, and I quickly destroyed it; my curiosity was once and for all satisfied. Such things are, of course, far away from art or science, which redeem all they touch, if it happens to need "redemption."

"The real obscenity lies in taboo"; that is the great truth on which Messrs. Ernst and Seagle have seized and sought to drive home in a world which is suffering from the ignorance of it. As they rightly point out, it is impossible to estimate the social damage which has thus been done. It is these taboos which have delayed until to-day the effort to combat venereal diseases and the discussion of the population question. The names of the evils were too "obscene" to mention and therefore the evils themselves were allowed to flourish unchecked, or else left to specialists and officials to discuss in technical terms. In another field the difficult problems raised by psycho-analysis have been dragged from the calm field of science to be perverted and distorted by the fas-

ination or the repulsion of the taboo against obscenity. Even in the sphere of history and biography the taboo against obscenity has stood in the way of an accurate knowledge of personalities and events; while now that the taboo is losing its force there is naturally a movement to the other extreme, with a tendency to distortion in the opposite direction, and we magnify the importance of the facts that before we were not allowed to see. For it is not one of the least evils of taboos that even the inevitable reaction they lead to is evil.

It seems so simple, so innocent, so entirely praiseworthy, to put down indecent literature by laws against "obscenity." We are, none of us, in favour of what seems to us indecent. It is impossible we should be, for the word means, if we search into it, simply what is unfit. Yet the simpler and more fundamental the conception of decency is seen to be the more it eludes any prescription of positive law. It is determined by the nature of the individual himself, by the feelings of his social group, and very notably by fashion. Most of us are old enough to know that less than twenty years ago the whole young womanhood of to-day would have been held guilty of indecency in dress and liable to be conducted to the nearest police station. In literature fashion is even more uncertain and elusive than in life, for the good reason that it is not produced by mass action. Messrs. Ernst and Seagle constantly bring forward examples of such fluctuations of opinion regarding books condemned by law, as well as examples of books legally condemned as obscene in England and free in America, or legally condemned in America and free in England. "The obscenity of to-day will be the propriety of to-morrow."

Law is made ridiculous when it is thus prostituted to the fashion of the hour. It is made immoral when it is thus perverted to the supposed protection of children. It used to be "women and children" who were assumed to be in need of such protection from the dangers of "obscenity." It is now only children, for women have rightfully insisted that in this matter they are henceforth to be put on the level of men and not of children. The problem of the child remains, and one of the wisest chapters in this book is that on 'Pornography and the Child.' It ought to be clear that we are not entitled to protect children by laws which also extend to adults and thus tend (sometimes with too much success) to convert adults into children. It is for the parents and teachers to protect the children. Yet it is admitted that there is "a twilight zone of disputed control between parents and government." In the realm of economics it is rightly held that the forces against the child should be restrained by laws against long hours of work and similar hardships. But to protect the child against "obscenity" by legislation is not only more difficult but less necessary. Pornography has no meaning and no attraction for the healthy child who casually comes in contact with it; the reaction is one of indifference, if not of disgust. To-day if any harm is caused it is less likely to come from pornography than from the crudely exaggerated films of vice and disease, presented by virtuous propagandists of social hygiene, which are apt to cause a painful shock to the virginal mind, just as the tender skin of the infant is injured by the hot bath of a temperature wholesomely stimulating to the adult. There are many uncensored things in life far more injurious to the young than obscenity. "A minor's pornography law" is here suggested, but tentatively, with much doubt; "we have faith that education, through school and home, will prove the enduring solution." Parents and teachers alone can be trusted to guide the child safely through these risks without injury to the freedom of adults. To-day this is being recognized by parents and teachers alike, even if not yet always in ways that are according to knowledge.

"The modern counterpart of modern witchcraft"—it is so that in the Preface the authors of this book describe the superstition of "obscenity." It is, indeed, an analogy which might well be worked out in greater detail. The witch-finders of the seventeenth century are a close counterpart of the obscenity-finders of to-day. The lurid halo around the witch made her a really injurious influence, just as the glamour we now cast around obscenity imparts to it an influence it would not otherwise possess. Witchcraft, like obscenity, was not altogether the product of the witch-finder's imagination. But so far as it was real it could not be touched by the ducking-stool or the law court. It melted away under the influence of a more reasonably humane and civilized attitude.

It was precisely at the time when the development of science and civilization was leading to the proper estimate of witchcraft that ferocity in the persecution of witches reached its height. We may say the same to-day about obscenity. The old sex taboos are dissolving. We are beginning to face openly the facts of sex, with a degree of intelligence and frankness which even a quarter of a century ago was impossible. That new honesty and sincerity itself stirs up the persecutorial fanaticism of the descendants of the witch-finders. Yet until the crime of "obscenity" goes the way of the crime of witchcraft, it is idle to talk of civilization.

AGORAPHOBIA: OR THE FUTURE OF CAMBRIDGE

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT]

Cambridge, November 14

I MENTIONED in my last letter the necessity to Cambridge of a western growth. Towards the east the University is hemmed in by a malevolent wen, explored to a certain depth by remoter lodgings and finally lost in localities which would not be out of place in Glasgow. I also mentioned that the present-day University lies roughly in two parallels, the one taking in those colleges which lie between Jesus and Downing, the other those from Magdalene to Peterhouse. For stupid people, who are unable to appreciate an organism, the Market Place presents a natural centre; while it continues to be considered as such Cambridge will remain, as she is now, an inorganic collation of colleges attached parasitically to an inferior host.

Six colleges are to-day faced with the need for development. If they would realize that the only direction in which the University can extend itself is towards the west, and if they would regard the question as all University questions should be regarded (from the point of view of infinite future as well as past time) they would see that the sooner our hold upon the Market Place is abandoned the sooner our hopes of formulating a unified seat of learning will be realized. For though it may have been convenient to regard the Backs as a back garden—which their name too distressingly signifies—when Cambridge was still small enough to believe itself crouched about the Market Hill, it will be impossible to do so when our numbers are double their present strength. The University is growing and must grow beyond the Queens' Road. This has already been proved by the very judicious placing of Newnham and Selwyn and the new Clare buildings. When several thousands of years have passed, even if we behave with our utmost short-sightedness to-day, Cambridge will consist of four parallels (two on each side of the river: Sidney Street, Trinity Street, Queens' Road, and Grange Road) in spite of us. It is the only natural growth possible. In the face of the inevitability of nature we ought not to queer our pitch by erecting a nondescript new library on one

of our future central sites and by continuing to maintain a scrabbling hold upon our long extenuated position. A public-spirited college would admit this tendency and further its very desirable realization by temporarily inconveniencing itself and building beyond the river. For it is an inconvenience. First, from the human point of view, few undergraduates will consider the more rural pleasures of an annexe in Grange Road a compensation for their divorce from the still central lecture rooms and coffee houses of the past and present. Next, the personal interests of the colleges in the sites beyond the river are of the most complicated. The plots on the west side of Queens' Road, for instance, contain the Fellows' Gardens of King's and Trinity. Are these beauty spots to be converted finally into colleges? One naturally replies: Never, until we are forced. Well, one day we shall be forced. There is no reason why we should touch them before that day, and there is no reason why we should keep them a moment after it, if they are to be replaced by new beauty. But to return to the complaint of those members of the University who would be compelled to live in a future annexe far from, to put it bluntly, the present shopping centre. Newnham and Selwyn have managed to survive, doubtless heroically. That future annexe may safely be expected to do so too in view of two further facts: (a) We are considering an age of increasing locomotion. (b) The more the University builds in that direction, the more the centre will shift towards it.

In however many years, we shall finally discover ourselves to be a unity lying about the beautiful spine of the river Cam, and it seems a pity to stave off that consummation when we are at liberty to advance it. In my own mind I picture a collection of colleges, similar to the present collection, set on the west side of the Queens' Road and on both sides of the Grange Road, with the green grass from Queens' Green to St. John's extension, and the slow water of the river, separating them from the ancient city. To this illusion the proceedings of the six colleges in question act as a fine purge. My facts, if not official, are widely known. King's College possesses a programme, deferred for five years, which makes wide designs on Peas Hill. Magdalene hopes to pull down shops on the opposite side of Bridge Street. St. Catherine's is pulling down parts of itself like John of Gaunt's cormorant. Sidney Sussex meditates an attack upon a boot shop in Sussex Street. Downing awaits a reversion to money, but the plans are unknown to me. And Caius menaces commercial buildings between Rose Crescent and St. Mary's Street. A list which more strikingly exemplifies our tooth and nail anxiety to maintain contact with what we ought long ago to have abandoned would be far to seek. St. Catherine's is probably the most justified, since the buildings seem likely to fall down shortly in any case. Caius is the worst offender, for it possesses a site actually on the Queens' Road and refuses to use it. The only bright light in the projected architectural changes is the purchase by a syndicate, for £42,000, of premises on the Market Place (comprising the offices of the *Cambridge Chronicle*, Hudson's Breweries, Craft's Shoe Company, and Boots, the Cash Chemists) in order to build there a cinema; and I hope it will be the ugliest cinema in the British Isles, that it may serve to frighten us off the Market, if nothing else will make us go.

Nobody knows better than your correspondent the practical objections to all theories, nor is more aware that the right thing will eventually accomplish itself even without my aid. It may also be argued that those who hold this view have not yet fully developed our present position, using the fourth argument recommended in 'Microcosmographia Academica' (The-

Time-is-Not-Yet-Ripe);* this may be so and remains a matter of opinion. If, however, we can foster the idea that the river is not only the most beautiful thing in Cambridge but its natural hub, and can accomplish nothing else, we shall have accomplished far more than we had a right to expect. We are not complaining that it is wrong to pull down bootshops or making any antiquarian appeal for the old streets of the University. The only point made is a simple one, that the future of Cambridge does not lie in the town: without consuming means why prey upon ourselves?

A GREAT BIOGRAPHER

BY HAMILTON FYFE

WHEN I read of Henry Festing Jones's death and looked in vain for any adequate tribute to his 'Life of Samuel Butler,' I asked myself "Have I rated that Life too highly? Am I wrong in considering it one of the great biographies?" And I determined to read it through at the week-end, so that I might decide whether my opinion of it was justified, or whether the daily newspapers were right in giving it a mention and no more.

Since it appeared I have read it many times, though not, after the first reading, straight through. I have dipped here or there, plunged at random, renewed my memory of certain passages, savoured a few chapters at a time, and never failed to find in its two stout volumes refreshment and recreation. Nor did I for a moment regret my week-end resolve. Three evenings I spent with Festing Jones's masterpiece and enjoyed it as keenly as ever.

Indeed, I believe I enjoyed it more, as one enjoys Boswell more and more, by reason of its familiarity. I knew what was coming; I felt I was among old friends. Friends so entertaining, so stimulating! Such wit, such warm-heartedness! Butler himself, with his kind heart and sharp-edged tongue, with his sublime common sense and obstinate wrong-headedness, with his poetic imagination and his strangely prosaic intelligence (*il sait tout, il ne sait rien, il est poète* was well said of him—by a woman, of course). No, not by Miss Savage, though she may have thought it. What a character, this heroine of a tragic-comedy of love! How one laughs with her, how one sorrows for her unrequited passion, how one wishes she had been younger and good-looking. Alas, she was "plain and lame and fat and short, Forty, and over-kind," as Butler phrased it; and he would have none of her as a wife, though he valued her friendship. Not a letter of hers that does not delight one by its exquisite comicality, its overflowing sense of fun.

If ever a History of Humour should be written Miss Savage will have to be introduced into it as one of the originators of the paradoxical variety which was provoked by the Victorian fondness for platitude. In the art of standing platitudes upon their heads not even Wilde, not Shaw, not Butler himself (from whom Shaw drew so much that is now considered essentially Shavian) excelled her. When he told of some pleasant conversations he had on his travels with priests, "Making friends with the Mammon of Righteousness," she flashed out. It seems easy to us:

All can grow the flower now,
For all have got the seed.

Butler's own quip about people who are "equally horrified at hearing the Christian religion doubted and at seeing it practised," falls on our ears as a common-

* "The Principle of Unripe Time is that people should not do at the present moment what they think right at that moment, because the moment at which they think it right has not yet arrived . . . Time, by the way, is like the medlar; it has a trick of going rotten before it is ripe."—F. M. Cornford.

place. Yet this form of humour, now firmly established, was once fresh, startling, and Miss Savage was (as her letters in the 'Life' prove abundantly) a progenitor of it. And then there is Alfred Cathie. If the story of Miss Savage is delicate, sentimental comedy, the Cathie episodes are rich, rollicking farce. Butler was a man (happily for his biographer) born to revolve among oddities of character. His father, the Canon, was a pure Victorian—we know him in 'The Way of all Flesh'; his sisters concealed a wealth of ill-nature behind expressions of unvarying tender affection. His grandfather, headmaster of Shrewsbury, had a pretty humour of his own. Coming into form one day and seeing inscribed on a wall, "Butler is an old fool," he murmured, "Ah, the melancholy truth stares me in the face." An uncle of Samuel Butler refused to wear night-shirts. They were "an unnecessary expense," he protested and went naked to his bed.

No one but Butler, one fancies, would have attracted Cathie into his service. No one else, we may be sure, would have allowed him to develop so gloriously when he got there. Engaged as clerk, this meritorious young man became as a Providence to his employer, watched over his goings-out and his comings-in, instructed him as to getting his hair cut and purchasing necessities of attire and toilet, arranged for him to go to the theatre when he "thought it would do him good." Butler would go out for the day provided by Alfred with small pieces of paper on which was written, "I am to buy a new hat," or a new pair of boots. Did he fail to obey, he received an ultimatum. "This is the last notice from Alfred to the effect that Samuel Butler, Esq., is to buy himself a new Hat. Failing to do so, there will be an awful scene on his return to Clifford's Inn."

When invitations came, they were submitted to Alfred for advice. Bishop Creighton asked Butler to stay a week-end at Peterborough. Alfred inspected the letter carefully. Then he said, "I see, sir, there is a crumb of tobacco in it. I think you may go." Butler's *chère amie* (whose "acquaintance he made somewhere near the Angel, Islington, when she was twenty-one") was a character too. She gave her cat a hot-cross-bun on Good Friday instead of meat. She said of a friend, "Elle va épouser en secondes noces un officier de la Sale-Vache Armée." But she was not as Alfred; nor did Butler, one suspects, feel for her the affection that Cathie extorted. He regarded himself "as a basket that has been entrusted to a dog," and his attitude towards the dog was entirely charming in its friendly gratitude. Once Alfred thinks he has been slighted because, leaving London by train, Butler did not come to the window to wave good-bye. "There was I standing in the rain, and you never looked at me." Butler went at once to a telegraph office, wired an apology, and "never offended in this way again." One impression that I treasure is that of Alfred on the Rigi. Butler has pointed out to him all the peaks and ranges in that wonderful view. "And now, if you please, sir," says Alfred, "I should like to lie down on the grass and have a read of *Tit-Bits*," which he forthwith does.

There may be some who think all this beneath the dignity of a biographer. If so, they must include Boszoy in their censure, and Lockhart too, for there is a plenty in the Life of Sir Walter that is both trivial and illuminating. After all, it is the trivial which most often reveals character, and if the revelation of character be not the sole sound aim of biography, call me a soused gurnet and condemn me to read none but Lives concocted by widows, or sons. Such concoctions are bad, *et pour cause*. They do not seek to show a man, they are anxious to exhibit a Perfect Being, or at any rate, a being not subject to the common failings of mankind.

The best of biography draws a portrait for us, and no matter what the original, if the portrait be lifelike, the world is the gainer by a Great Work. This further: a portrait to be lifelike must amuse and at the same time edify—that is, build in our minds an image, an example, it may be a warning. Those who are familiar with Festing Jones's biography of Butler know the man intimately; they know, too, more than they might know otherwise of the Victorian Age. Butler was not great any more than Johnson, though both had in them elements of greatness, such as would perhaps be seen in most men and women could we see them through and through. A biographer who should dwell solely, or mainly, on the extraordinary side of Butler would produce an unpleasant and a misleading picture. A biographer who should suppress his crankiness, his touchiness, his vanity, his *chère amie*, would show us only the husk of a man. Festing Jones sets Butler before us as he was, as he knew him ("to me he was the dearest, kindest, most considerate friend that any man ever had"), as his other friends knew him. His one endeavour was to present a man truly, and not less truly those with whom he lived. In that, it seems to me, he succeeded; therefore I hail him, believing that Posterity will hail him also (though not much caring whether Posterity does or not) as a Great Biographer.

MAX AND MORALS

BY GERALD GOULD

THE West End is not what it was. The neighbourhood is going down. It has lost tone, if we are to believe Mr. Max Beerbohm,* in the last forty-one thousand years. "To imagine Hay Hill as it then was," he says, "you must forget much of what, as you approach it from Berkeley Square or from Piccadilly, it is now." Then, in those better days, Berkeley Square itself "had no squareness. It was but a green valley that went, uninterrupted by any Piccadilly, into the Green Park." And the people who inhabited this pleasant homeland, if not the best people, were yet not bad. "They were a simpler folk than we are," says Mr. Beerbohm. "They knew far less than we know. They did not, for example, know they were living thirty-nine thousand years before Christ." But this sort of weakness and error is common in comparatively modern times; Homer was deficient, as Swift pointed out, in the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England. The only real fault of the homelander was that, being too happy in their happiness, they made trouble for themselves by backbiting and bickering. Mr. Beerbohm's attitude to them is somewhat more austere than one would expect from the genial creator of Lord George Hell, who (as every schoolboy knows) was thirty-five years old and a great grief to his parents. It is, in fact, the attitude of the nurse who says to her charges: "Very well, I'll give you something to cry for." Mr. Beerbohm gives the homelander a dragon.

The presence of the dragon on the hill, and still more his habit of occasionally descending to the valley and consuming inhabitants, created national unity and sympathy. "People who did not know each other, or had for years not been on speaking terms, found themselves eagerly

* 'The Dreadful Dragon of Hay Hill.' By Max Beerbohm. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

conversing, in face of the common peril." But conversation saves no bones: the dragon continued to descend and eat, and might have continued so doing indefinitely, but for the vanity, resolution, courage and sexual passion which combined to make a hero of Thol. Shib was no good, with all his administrative efficiency; and as for Veo, he ought to have been called Neo; his drawings were truly mural; and, anticipating the æsthetic standards of Mr. Roger Fry, he insisted upon calling the dragon beautiful. Thol was a different matter: a sort of Poor White, with red hair, he yet aspired to the hand of Thia, who was beautiful, and sang, and danced: moreover, Thia had called him a coward, and he was perfectly determined to show her whether he was a coward or not. So he practised with a flint-headed spear (protopalæolithic), and shoved it into the roof of the dragon's mouth. The dragon was slain, Thia was won, Thol was worshipped as a god. Thia, who knew very well he wasn't a god, and was glad of his manhood, made a song and dance about it; but no longer were her singing and dancing matters of supreme importance to the homelander. They had become Tholipists: they thought they knew a god when they saw one. So Thol, who, apart from his gift for dragon-killing, was slightly dumb from the neck up, grew a large red beard and got fat. It seems that he would even have taken to drink, had there been drink to take to. As it was, Afa wove him a chaplet of flowers, at a feast which his wife did not attend; and he was foolish enough to go home wearing the chaplet. So Thia left him, and built herself a hut, of clay and wattles, in the place which is now Gerrard Street, Soho.

Thol, as he had originally been resolute to win her, was now resolute to win her back. But how? He had done one great deed; and "somehow the homelander had become less good because of it." The national unity created by danger had disappeared, had melted away; the old bickerings had been resumed; and the young people had grown up to the Yale Blues . . . Well, perhaps I am confusing the centuries; I may be out in my dates, by forty-one thousand years or so; but you must admit the mistake is natural, when you consider what Mr. Beerbohm says. "Freedom was all." The youths and maidens were "intent on making the most of their freedom." "Their freedom was their religion; and, as every religion needs rites, they ritualistically danced." They danced, moreover, "in a grim and purposeful, an angular and inflexible manner"; they danced "with ever greater assiduity and solemnity"; but "other forms of seriousness were not manifested by them." Is it possible one has somewhere read something a little like this before . . . something, somewhere, about the Modern Girl?

Anyway, to cut a short story shorter (for Mr. Beerbohm's own delicate narrative runs to little more than a hundred pages), Thol recovered his manly status, and the affection of his wife, by faking a new dragon. Immediate moral improvement in the homelander! But death came to Thol and to Thia; the regenerate race discovered that the second dragon had been an impersonation; "and before the sun sank many other times the

homelander were as they had been before the coming of the true dragon, and as they had been again before the false one was among them." They cried, I suppose, because they had nothing to cry for!

Yet surely we have read also—somewhere—something like *this*? Are we not being led up the very garden into which Maud was invited, not so long ago? Of that, at any rate, into which she invited others?—

She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,
And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars—

Well, the wars came, and everything in that garden was presumably lovely; but afterwards the dragon was killed (only we forgot to worship the hero who killed it); and the young did certainly take to dances of an extraordinary severity. The parallel, if not complete, is striking. Only—can this be what "Max" means?

"Max," the perfect, the ironic, the set-apart, viewer and reviewer of mankind? "Max," with the pen of honey and the pencil of gall—whose sympathy has never boggled at the follies and fashions, while his satire destroyed them? "Max," who has gone so deep by pretending that his perfection did but flutter the surface? Has "Max" written a story with a moral, and is the moral that we ought to frighten and deceive? Are all the politicians and all the parties and all the preachers wrong, when they tell us that we ought to work for public welfare, and that happiness breeds virtue, and that the end desired is peace? Are those who let loose fire and rapine the true friends of humanity? Is the millennium to bring domestic friction, and Utopia to break up the home? Is a dragon, a real one or a false, what we need to make the best of us? If it be so, let us go back forty-one thousand years, and try again!

But it is to be hoped—and indeed it is to be expected—that Mr. Beerbohm is pulling our legs. Propaganda has never been his line, and he would hardly start it at this time of day, and at that angle. He must surely mean only that it is absurd for us to draw any moral, since any moral we draw must be so absurd. Or, perhaps, he has written from sheer lightness of heart, and doesn't care what we draw, or what we think. After his "Finis," he puts a final note; and it is to tell us that one effort is as futile as another, for all the good it does to those to whom it does good. It is only for the sake of Thol and Thia, he says, that we wish the good they did could have been lasting. "But it is not in the nature of things that anything—except the nature of things—should last. Saints and wise statesmen can do much. Their reward is in the doing of it. They are lucky if they do not live long enough to see the undoing." And "Max's" reward for writing this charming book is presumably in the writing of it. Who could better deserve a recompense so satisfactory? To draw morals from an account of what quite possibly never happened at all is like that proverbial pastime, so foreign to the Maxian diathesis, of brushing away the bloom from the wings of butterflies. To dragons, let us pay the tribute of incredulity; goats and sheep, beeves and babes, fail them for fodder: but on our incredulity they will live for ever.

LORD MAYOR UNVISITED

By J. B. PRIESTLEY

ONE day last week—to be exact, on the ninth of November—nearly everybody here had a fantastic time of it. This is what happened to me in the morning, quite early too, before ten o'clock. I went to see a man in a white coat, and he made me lie back in a huge chair, and then another man in a white coat covered my nose and mouth with a horrible black bag. I found I could not breathe properly, had one second of appalling panic, but then seemed to recover, for I remember telling somebody that this black bag business was a great mistake. Who this somebody was I do not know, but it was not either of the men in white coats. I saw them after this other mysterious conversation had ended, and they were smiling and telling me it was all over and handing me tumblers of warm pinkish stuff. Five ivory bits of me were lying in a row on a table near by. I am not the same man that first sat in that chair—or if I am, then indeed we are immortal creatures. It is queer how inconsistent we are. When we are reading sad and learned little books, we are ready to agree with their authors that we are nothing but a bright conference of particles, so much blood and bone and hair on the move; but in our ordinary talk we quietly assume that we are immortal beings, here with a body for a season. We say, "I have had some teeth out," just as if the teeth were not really a part of us; and we shed an appendix or a gall-bladder, a leg or an arm, but allow what remains of us to go on saying "I" all the time as if we were just the same. This should be looked into, I feel.

When I returned home, I discovered that the prospect of leaving the house again that day did not appeal to me. Indeed, it was understood that I should stay in, and I spent the rest of the morning and all the afternoon either mixing more of the warm pinkish stuff or picking up books, staring at a page or two, then putting them down again. It is a fine thing to have at your elbow a pile of good new books, but somehow the least suggestion of pain in the face seems to make it impossible to read such new books. The publishers' superlatives are hardly dry on the paper jackets: "This brilliant . . ."; "Undoubtedly the greatest . . ."; "The rarest of all . . ."; "An unforgettable . . ."; and all true, entirely just, well-deserved; but somehow I could not bother to read them. I did not have a miserable day. One rarely does have a really miserable day. There is a certain pleasure in being a man who has just had five teeth out, a mixer of pinkish stuff. But I was not pleased when I learned at tea-time that I had "missed it." Missing it is hateful, and nothing makes me more angry than the thought that all manner of things may happen in the universe before long and I shall probably know nothing about them. At this moment there may be solar systems, dozens of planets whirling about green or purple suns, that have evolved a life even more fantastic and entertaining than ours, and yet you and I are in the dark about it all and will for ever stay in the dark. It is maddening.

Not that I believe for one second that I missed

as much as they said I did. Their story was altogether too fantastic, and I suspect they concocted most of it on the way home. But this is what happened. On that Friday there was an expedition from this house to see the Lord Mayor's Show. The party included two little girls, Angela and Barbara, and a much larger girl, Suzette, who has just arrived from France; and it was they who told me all about it at tea-time. Now it is true that Suzette is tremendously old, grown-up—for she is eighteen—but nevertheless I believe she too was in the conspiracy. I admit that I did not hear much of the story from her, for when she speaks English she is so very slow that I forget the words at the beginning of the sentence long before she has reached the end, and when she speaks French she is so quick that it all runs together and I can only make out things like "Tiens" and "Alors," things that do not mean very much. Over there in France, however, they have a passion for mayors and would do anything for a Lord Mayor, so that I can well believe that Suzette was in the conspiracy.

That they saw policemen and soldiers and boy scouts and heard a lot of bands playing, I have no difficulty in believing. I may not have ever seen the Lord Mayor's Show, but I have seen dozens and dozens of processions and they nearly always have soldiers and boy scouts and bands in them. Nothing was said about clean coal wagons, but if I know anything about processions, they were there too. I am ready to believe too that there was a huge milk bottle carried down the street, and a car filled with fruit, and another car showing a dirty house and a clean house. So far, so good. But now we come to some very dubious stuff. What about all those little toy soldiers? And King Alfred—what was he doing there? And that ship—how could there be a ship sailing down Fleet Street? And when we come to the Lord Mayor himself, it gets queerer and queerer. Nobody can make me believe that the Lord Mayor of London, a contemporary of yours and mine, a fellow citizen and ratepayer, an Alderman, and—to crown all—a cricketer and the head of the Polytechnic in Regent Street, rode through the streets of this city in a gilded coach drawn by six horses, a coach like Cinderella's, only much larger. Of course, if you are going to admit the coach, there is no sense in trying to keep out the pleasant little additions to the legend, the accounts of coachmen and footmen in white wigs and gold lace, trumpeters in purple velvet. Once you have passed the golden fairy-tale coach, you might as well let them all come, coachmen, footmen, trumpeters, bowmen, knights in armour, alchemists, and I know not what. Except the two giants, Gog and Magog, for even if I am driven to believe in the coach and the rest, I will not swallow the story of the giants.

There was some difference of opinion here about the giants. Barbara, the smallest member of the party, said that they were real. In answer to a query by a still younger sister (so small that she stayed at home), Barbara gave it as her considered judgment that these were not the kind of giants that make a practice of eating people, especially very little girls, who have to hide their heads in the bed-clothes at night when

the mischievous cry goes up in the nursery, "Giants coming!" No, they were friendly fellows who had merely asked to be allowed to join in the procession. But there was no doubt they were real because you saw their eyes move. Angela, however, declared that they were not real giants but "made-up things with men in their legs." I refuse to believe they were either one or the other, that any giants were there. If I allowed myself to believe it, I should cry with vexation. The hours and hours I have spent in that miserable Fleet Street, never seeing anybody go up and down it but advertising men, sub-editors, specialists in the off-set process, reviewers, business managers of 'The Rabbit World' and 'The Evangelist's Companion,' all hurrying towards whisky-and-splashes or reluctantly leaving whisky-and-splashes, and all looking alike; with nothing in the street itself but a roaring pack of 11 and 13 buses and taxis and vans full of soda-water or empty biscuit tins! And then these people sneak off one morning to this same Fleet Street and find it all festooned with flags and clashing with cymbals, with not an advertising man or bus in sight, and then see a procession of people from fairy tales and nursery rhymes parade its length, gold coaches, giants, and all! No, I will never believe that.

I must confess, though, that I was a little shaken when, in the evening, I read that the present Lord Mayor is an Alderman of the Ward of Farringdon, or Farndone, Without, the only ward that elects an alderman for the Within and an alderman for the Without. I could not help having an uneasy feeling that these stories I heard might be true after all, for when your alderman comes from a place called Farndone Without, obviously anything might happen. Then I remembered that former Lord Mayor, Dick Whittington, and it struck me then that the City of London is really a fairy tale and nursery rhyme sort of place. But I held on, accepting nothing stranger than a boy scout.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

- ¶ The Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW welcomes the free expression in these columns of genuine opinion on matters of public interest, though he disclaims responsibility alike for the opinions themselves and the manner of their expression.
 ¶ Letters on topical subjects, intended for publication the same week, should reach him on Tuesday.

TEN YEARS AFTER

SIR,—According to your last number you do not seem to think that any of the three political parties has a programme likely to carry away the voters at the next General Election. But do not your articles 'Ten Years After' and '1918-1928-1938,' show what is most wanted, namely disarmament?

At present the Governments mean by disarmament, keeping a sufficient force to resist attack by any other Government which has sworn never to go to war with them. No serious effort to do away with submarines, bombs from the air, poison gas, etc. The French hold that trained reservists (presumably equipped) should not be counted as effectives! Yet M. Briand said that Germany was not disarmed because many Germans had fought in the war. Now that Germany is a member of the League of Nations, she is entitled to have her armaments reviewed by the League (Art. 164 of the Peace Treaty). And if France keeps up a large army, Germany would have good ground for claim-

ing an increase in her armaments; because, in spite of pacts, she had not the minimum consistent with national safety (Art. 8 of Treaty). And then we should begin again as before the war which was to end war.

It is about time that the peoples of every country made it clear that they object to being lamed, tortured, and poisoned, just because Governments prepare for war and then get it. On these terms we could do much better without Governments. What a chance this subject would give to a fiery orator like Gladstone; he would rouse the whole country.

I am, etc.,

"VICTORIAN"

THE BROWNINGES

SIR,—Having to thank Mr. Christopher Hollis for one correction, it is an added pleasure to read his contribution to the solution of two "problems" that the poets continue, among keen readers, to excite. If I venture to qualify his conclusions, it is only in so far as these turn, to the extent that the opinions of any poets can turn, upon questions of fact.

Mr. Hollis raises two questions:

1. What was Mrs. Browning's attitude to unmarried wives?
2. How far did Browning subscribe to the creed of the Christian Church?

Demurring to a passing reference in 'The Brownings' which contrasts 'Aurora Leigh' with Hardy's 'Tess,' Mr. Hollis observes: "Hardy's doctrine of unmarried purity would have been to her merely the dangerous sentimentality of a man, ignorant of the meaning of words."

How admirably hard is this comment, cutting confusion like a sword! Logic is certainly with him, but on matters of the height is logic enough? Even more than in most poets, and specially in her attitude to human relations, in fine to Love, Mrs. Browning makes us feel that virtue of the faith which was blazed in its illogical supremacy by St. Augustine: "Love is above the sacraments." The statement is theologically true, but the application of this truth, for those who are not saints, is, clearly, hazardous. In the substance of this belief, at all events, Mrs. Browning was at one with St. Augustine; her life proves it; her writings prove it, by the aroma of a quality that is the peculiar perfume of her style.

Mr. Hollis does not believe that Robert Browning "cared a fig" for "sceptical speculations." Others, nearer the poet than I, do; the final verses that he quotes from 'Gold Hair' seem perhaps laconic, but the laconic manner was natural to the poet; it can be found even in the opening of his furious lines to Edward Fitzgerald; but, if we want the feel of the quick of him wounded on this matter, how about 'Fears and Scruples'?—in particular the lines:

If I could but muzzle
 People's foolish mouths that give me pain!
 All my days I'll go the softlier, sadder,
 For that dream's sake!

Yet, we need not exchange quotations. The answer is given by the poet's intimate friend, expositor, and biographer, Mrs. Sutherland Orr. On page 284 of my own book she is quoted as follows: "Christ remains for Mr. Browning a mystery and a message of Divine Love, but no messenger of Divine intention towards mankind."

Mrs. Orr knew the poet well, had plied him with questions, was appointed by himself the authoritative exponent of his works. How, on an explicit question, can we evade her precise words? This is a matter between her and Mr. Hollis, and your readers should realize that it is not between me and him. Only that she may not be eclipsed by any supposed gloss of my own do I trouble you, for Mr. Hollis appears over-generously to be crediting me, here, with a grain of her gold.

I am, etc.,

OSBERT BURDETT

23 Clarendon Road, Harrow-on-the-Hill

SMITH OR HOOVER?

SIR,—May I point out two misstatements of fact in the always eminently readable SATURDAY?

In 'Smith or Hoover?' in the issue of November 3, the writer says:—"Neither Mr. Hoover nor Mr. Smith has been connected with, or even interested in, the party machine." Mr. Smith throughout his political life has been always and only a machine man. He found his first and his most lasting support in Tammany; and his hold upon the National Democratic organization was such that even in 1924 he was able to deadlock the New York Convention, defeating the long and carefully prepared candidature of William McAdoo, and sending the party to overwhelming defeat under John W. Davis.

In the 'House Papers' Mr. Herbert Sidebotham writes: "Colonel House never had any official position." He forgets, surely, that House was fully commissioned as a High Commissioner of the United States at the Paris Peace Conference, and as such affixed his signature to the Treaty of Versailles.

I am, etc.,

99 Great Russell Street, CHALMERS ROBERTS
London, W.C.1

WASTED BUILDING SPACE

SIR,—I have been staying at Eastbourne, where the week-end has been reduced to twenty-four hours, and find at an hotel there one can have a bedroom with bath-room connecting direct through one door.

I have lately seen several ultra-modern flats in London where every inch of space is valuable, but in every case there had to be some sort of vacant space to form a lobby between the two rooms. I very much dislike the inside bath-room arrangement one has to put up with abroad and appreciate the rule that there should be an outside window, but as such a healthy town as Eastbourne, with its hundreds of schools, does not demand such complete isolation—modern sanitation being so perfect—why must this vacant space be imposed on London? We have enough restrictions and interferences without this regulation, which adds unnecessarily to the expense of building and consequently to the expense of the public who occupy the rooms. Moreover, as everyone knows, we are hard up for space in London.

I am, etc.,

"COMMON SENSE"

'BY FAITH OR BY SIGHT.'

SIR,—Mr. Walter Bayes writes that Toulouse-Lautrec is drifting into that class of artists whose works are worshipped "by Faith and not by Sight." Perhaps if Mr. Bayes had relied on faith and mistrusted his sight he might not have mistaken a collection of lithographs for an exhibition of drawings, nor the pictures of Paul Nash for those of his brother, John.

We are, etc.,

ERNEST BROWN AND PHILLIPS

The Leicester Galleries,
Leicester Square, W.C.2

[Throughout his criticism Mr. Walter Bayes referred to Mr. Paul Nash by his correct name: the confusion with his brother, John, occurred only through a printer's error, in the heading to the article. About the other matter to which our correspondents draw attention Mr. Bayes writes as follows:

"*Touche*—I apologize to Messrs. Brown and Phillips for my lack of technical discernment. Compared with the poster designs of Lautrec, the works shown were so little designed that I mistook them for extemporized sketches. My conclusion that the handling of the lithographer's chalk had any virtue in this case is thus clearly wrong. Perhaps the responsibility of working in harness commercially may have had."—Ed. S.R.]

THE FILMS

THE INSANE ROOT

BY IVOR BROWN

Serenade. (General Release.)

The Last Waltz. (General Release.)

MY visits to the kinema are rare and usually conditioned by accident. Whenever there is a new Chaplin episode I go on purpose; otherwise my entries to the home of darkness and dithering fiddles are as fate determines. Either I am lured in by company, or else, being caught between two appointments and with no temptation to tramp rain-swept streets, I eagerly seek refuge. My last bolt for shelter carried me into the arms of Babe Ruth and the dizzying delights of a base-ball drama. It seems to me an excellent thing that picture-houses should exist, particularly in a country with a wet climate and no habit of café-lounging or at least no attractive apparatus of cafés in which to lounge. The kinema provides cushioned warmth and a drowsy air; an entertainment proceeds which impinges on the mind only so far as the mind permits. If you choose to dream, you may; the pleasures of nicotine and courtship are equally permissible. Should you prefer to sit up and take notice, something that is preposterous and lavish and far larger than life will be visible. The kissing, for instance, will be of a standard that may be described as more Continental than continent. Suppose that, one December day, you have arrived in Coketown to do business, exhort the electors, deliver a lecture, or otherwise endure the toils and tribulations of guinea-grubbing; suppose that an hour or so intervenes between train and torment and that licensed premises are closed—why then, how excellent the movies seem with their promise of warm nothingness and the lush lullaby of unseen violins!

Accordingly with the kinema as convenience I can have no possible quarrel. I go there from time to time in search of nothingness or nonsense and I get what I pay for. Here, in the bleakest street of Coketown and in regions infest with chapels, fog, and chimneys, Countesses are pursued on horseback and seduced amid the eternal snows or burning sands. There is ample value for money. The sands and snows, I am told, are scrupulously true to the climatic provision of Nature herself, and the Countess, I doubt not, is extremely baronial as well as nobly booted, spurred, mounted, and, in general, designed to please. I am pleased and all around me is pleasure. The heart of Coketown pulses while the hand of Coketown pays. On the basis of a-bob-a-throb, the contract between Los Angeles and Coketown is admirably observed. There are no complaints.

But when my cultivated friends come and tell me that the kinema is full of good and great spectacles, of rare subtleties and visual rhythms, it is then that I rise in revolt. Acting under their advice I once hustled off to see a dreary farrago of sociological pretentiousness called 'Metropolis.' The producer, having hired a multitude, then proceeded to have that multitude photographed, with the result that it did, on the screen, look just like a multitude. The high-brows were ravished. In the theatre I have seen five men satirize five thousand and have enjoyed the midget's cartoon of the monster; on the screen you see a myriad men pretending to be a myriad—and succeeding. I cannot find anything clever in that. I have the sense of much money, much drill, and some good trickery with cameras, all excellent things in themselves, but entirely wasted if they are applied to some grandiose political pessimism that has not two grains of sense in the whole two hours of panorama. In 'Metropolis,' for instance, which was supposed to be a scathing survey of the future, the workers

were being treated in the manner of 1780. If all the wealth and regimentation which had gone to make up 'Metropolis' had been used for some gigantically fatuous spectacle which would be just the right anodyne for my Coketown afternoons, I should not have grumbled. Parade me your vamps and villains by the score. Let entertainment flourish. All that I ask is that we should not confuse art with entertainment.

Meanwhile my curiosity remains. I want to understand what it is the high-brow movie-fans have in their minds. Last Sunday I observed that a film-critic of serious intention and considerable faith in the aesthetic possibilities of the pictures selected for special mention as good things of the week, 'Serenade' and 'The Last Waltz.' Discovering a house where the two were in the bill together, I eagerly pursued my quest. I did not see the whole of 'Serenade,' but the beginning of the story was easy enough to guess. However, I shall say nothing of this piece except that M. Menjou flickers through it with his personable ease; perhaps even "flickers" it is too strong a word, so immobile has the comedian's method become, so strenuously does he under-act. I saw M. Menjou in 'Service for Ladies,' a film which never quite lived up to its gently alluring title, and I now feel that I have had enough of the scarce perceptible wince, the narrowed, tightened eyes. M. Menjou has entertained me; I am grateful. I ask no more of the films. But a great artist? If they say that, then I simply do not understand. Either I am film-blind or the constant film-goer has so rotted his judgment that he has no critical power left. Modesty may prompt me to the former view, but self-respect impels me to the latter. Is it not probable that a continual diet of Los Angeles plums and the eternal Californian syrup of fig-leaves reduce the human mind to subnormality? At Hollywood there grows the insane root which takes the reason prisoner.

I felt the more convinced of this as I watched 'The Last Waltz.' This is a Ufa film—and I gather that its making has been directed by the producer of 'Warning Shadows.' That is as much as a strong recommendation from the high-brow quarter and my critic had marked it as "almost a great film." Well, what was it all about? A Balkan Crown Prince, who sentenced to death his life-long friend, attaché, and one-time rescuer, because he intervened with a Galahad's sword when the Prince was on the point of raping a delectable Countess in the upper chamber of a mountain tavern. Galahad performed prodigies of superb self-sacrifice; having escaped when on parole and with the Orient Express conveniently stopped to take him to Paris, he came back to face the firing squad for the honour of the regiment. Administer this kind of thing with some cunning photography of snowstorms and Orient Expresses, put a waltz in its heart and a dash of good looks everywhere, and who will not be as much entertained as he is by the short story glimpsed between Paddington and Reading? But impressed, reverential, muttering about greatness! Not I. Nor anyone else who has not been cramming himself these half-dozen years with the insane root and the berries that benumb the brain. Let me not be thought to be acting in restraint of trade. Go, by all means, to 'Serenade' or to 'The Last Waltz' for an hour's careless interval amid your business; but do not pretend that you are austere climbing Parnassus when you are indulgently filling a gap.

I am not denying that genius may work in the studio; it plainly has done so. Chaplin is an inventive clown who does not abide our question. All I ask is that the film-devotee should not ride so furiously upon the high horse. I contest absolutely the suggestion that there can be any comparison of values between acting on the stage, where the performance is recreated every night and a blunder is a thing from which there is no return, and film-acting with its slow

shaping by the producer until the player has been sufficiently drilled for the photographer to "shoot" and "shoot" again should the right result not be achieved. Inventing a film must be a challenge to all the faculties, but acting it is merely a matter of plasticity if the producer is a good one. When film-stars with no ordinary theatrical experience do take the stage they simply make fools of themselves. But they always collect an audience of hysterical maniacs who turn the first house into a wilderness of monkeys. These film-fans, who invade the theatre when one of their gods or goddesses is on view, are definitely sub-human. They have not only tasted the root, but gnawed and guzzled it until they have no wits left and can only gasp and giggle and swelter in their seats.

LITERARY COMPETITIONS—142

SET BY MARTIN ARMSTRONG

A. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for a lyric, in not more than eight lines, on a gramophone record of a string quartet, regarded in the twofold aspect of a disc of vulcanite and a potential source of music.

B. We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for a nonsense speech in blank verse, not more than 15 lines long, parodying Shakespeare at his most magniloquent. The speech must be nonsense but not gibberish: that is, grammar, syntax, and the English language, as Shakespeare used them, must be employed, but coherent meaning must be avoided.

RULES

i. All envelopes must be marked LITERARY, followed by the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and addressed to the Editor, The SATURDAY REVIEW, 9 King Street, London, W.C.2 (e.g., this week: LITERARY 142a, or LITERARY 142a).

ii. Typescript is not essential, provided the writing is legible, but competitors must use one side of the paper only. Pen-names may be employed if desired.

iii. Where a word limit is set, every fifty words must be marked off by competitors on their MSS.

iv. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves to himself the right to print in part or in whole any matter sent in for competition, whether successful or not. MSS. cannot be returned. Competitors failing to comply with any of the rules will be disqualified. Should the entries submitted be adjudged undeserving of award the Editor reserves the right to withhold a prize or prizes.

Entries must reach the Editor addressed according to the rules, not later than by the first post on Monday, November 26, 1928. The results will be announced in the issue of December 1.

RESULTS OF COMPETITIONS 140

SET BY J. B. MORTON

A. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for an original Poem.

B. Invent a characteristic phrase or epigram which might (but does not) occur in the work of each of the following writers: G. K. Chesterton; J. M. Barrie; H. G. Wells; Aldous Huxley; Michael Arlen; A. A. Milne; Dean Inge; Lytton Strachey. We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best entries submitted.

REPORT FROM MR. J. B. MORTON

140A. As the babel of the large crowd of competitors dies down, I begin to distinguish voices here and there. There are ballades and sonnets; there is a sestina; there is a poem in French. People sent epigrams, small collections of lyrics and songs.

Somebody tried with a dramatic fragment, and somebody else with a poem that I eventually deciphered by reading through a looking-glass. Nearly all the entrants are in love, and of those the greater part wish that they were dead. Half-way through I cry, with C. D. B. E., "Is pleasure so sure that it cannot fail?"

I expected the few Armistice lyrics, and the many magazine verses, but what I looked for in vain was a really good poem. T. E. Casson's Ode to the Lancashire Cricket Team was like a douche of fresh water after too many muggy rose-gardens. And I experienced pure delight when I found J. C. H. Hill's:

The night was dark as night could be,
Blacker than any bag,
When, stayed with dripping-toast and tea,
I left the "Spotted Stag."

The wind blew shrill; it was a night
Fit for all evil works.
Yet aided by the moon's wan light,
I reached Great Coxwell (Berks).

I doubt if even Browning could have pulled off A's attempt, with its opening line:

My old desk has come to-day to the new house . . .

When the issue had been narrowed to eight or nine pieces of verse, I rejected Gordon Daviot's sonnet on account of one weak line and several conventional adjectives, and his second entry only after long consideration. G. M. Graham's spirited attempt to keep out of a rut deserves mention, and Pibwob only fails because his sonnet is a little too lifeless, though a very neat example of a certain pattern of poetical thought. For honourable mention I select K. T. Huss. I recommend that the first prize be given to L. A. G. Strong, and the second to Patrick Cahill, who maintained his trajectory right up to the penultimate line. Very close on his heels comes Alice Herbert, with the first of her two entries, 'A Man to His Wife.'

FIRST PRIZE

THE DOOR

One in the boat cried out
Pointing to land,
For the sun leaped clear of the mist
And a rainbow spanned
With one vast arch the mountain, the trees, and the sand.
The mountain stood like a huge
Ghost in a cloud;
The startled trees were caught
In a wavering crowd,
And the four in their glittering oilskins cried aloud
As that pure and soaring arch
More marvellous grew,
And the sandhills stared beneath it
Wild and new,
And down the unearthly beaches lamenting flew
Gull upon gull distraught
Blown through that Door,
Handful on handful flung
High over the shore.
Such desperate beauty they never had seen before.

L. A. G. STRONG

SECOND PRIZE.

THE TEMPTATION OF A MONK

As some forced exiles in the songs they sing
Visit a while the land that had their duty.
So came to him his boyhood's dreams of beauty
And set the heart's closed chambers echoing:
So that from the neglected, various throng
Of influences and forgotten ghosts
He heard the trumpets of the fabulous hosts
That fight for ever in immortal song.

Then of the storied men whose empery
Had been once on his heart, he saw those few
Whose memory is a fire of poesy;
And found his comfort in their calm, and knew
In honourable war and deathless fame
Always their strength had been their Saviour's name.

PATRICK CAHILL

COMMENDED

A MAN TO HIS WIFE

"You are myself, my very self!" I rapturously said;
And that indeed, and that alone, is all you prove to be.
Yours is no trumpet call to raise the spirit from the dead,
Only a sweeter echo of the dying voice in me.
We are at peace together, as we shall be in the grave;
There are no storms to quicken us, or thunder from above;
But . . . could you have withheld them, all the light con-
sents you gave,
We had not lost eternity for fear of losing love.

ALICE HERBERT

140B. The entries were few and disappointing. Only three competitors came within a million miles of what was required. Lester Ralph was uneven, and only succeeded with three or four of the writers. I recommend that the prize money be divided evenly between G. A. Newall and W. R. Dunstan. They run neck and neck. I think Mr. Newall's Dean Inge and Lytton Strachey are less true to life than Mr. Dunstan's, but he makes up the ground with his G. K. Chesterton.

THE WINNING ENTRIES

CHESTERTON: The trouble about refinement is its essential vulgarity.

BARRIE: Men, when they take wives, forget that they are marrying, not one woman, but all women.

WELLS: And eventually women like Belinda will seem as remote and unproductive as the ichthyosaurus.

ALDOUS HUXLEY: Modern civilization advanced only when it was discovered that the body was more important than the soul.

ARLEN: He found his illusions profitable—so he kept them.

MILNE: He was a little weak with the pull, but his slice was magnificent.

INGE: I sometimes think that lost causes are the only ones worth supporting.

STRACHEY: The materialists were too busy building their castles to notice that they were building them upon sand.

G. A. NEWALL

CHESTERTON: There are only two alternatives open when a man disagrees with you—to convince him or to bash him.

BARRIE: Tammas peered through the glass, darkly.

WELLS: Mr. Jones had brushed-up hair and spoke curate's English.

ALDOUS HUXLEY: We stood apart. The body had suffered a sea-change, coprological in its obscenity.

ARLEN: No man is really a woman-hater. It depends on her pass-book.

MILNE: An artist is known by the way he eats asparagus.

INGE: Advertisement apart, there is no necessity for martyrdom.

STRACHEY: He had written a volume of verse—if the title-page is to be trusted.

W. R. DUNSTAN

BACK NUMBERS—XCIX

SOME forty years ago W. E. Henley contributed to the SATURDAY articles on Dumas and Tolstoy, and looking them over again I am minded, with an eye to the subject which will be dealt with in next week's 'Back Numbers,' to examine his treatment of novelists in general. He was not, indeed, the spokesman of average opinion in the 'eighties, but he spoke for an important minority, those who demanded mind and art in their fiction and were not complacently insular. He had been a great reader of Balzac, from before the day on which Stevenson took him many volumes, "impudently French," in the Edinburgh Infirmary; and he knew French fiction as a whole. In regard to English, he was among those few who were energetic in championship of Meredith, but not, like most of them, blind to Meredith's self-frustrating extravagances. He had joined in that revolt against George Eliot ("the apotheosis of pupil-teachery") which perhaps began with the publication of Swinburne's 'Note on Charlotte Brontë.' In all this, he was one of the elect, not particularly notable among them. What differentiated Henley was his combination of enthusiasm for the Scott-Dumas-Stevenson ideal of romance with devotion to the English eighteenth-century masters.

* *

His position was intelligible, but it had its weaknesses. There is nothing in such criticism by him as I have read to show he realized how many of his standards he dropped when he passed from praising Balzac or Tolstoy to praising Dumas or Fielding. Certain preliminary concessions made, Dumas can hardly be overpraised. The mass and momentum of that prodigious creature, his gusto, his tireless invention, his human warmth, are excuse enough for superlatives. But much of Dumas, and of Scott and Stevenson, is addressed to the boy in us, and it is idle to pretend that the most genial production under such limitations sets a man among the greatest masters. He is right in calling Dumas "a natural force"; but he will have it that Dumas is also an artist "with an incomparable instinct of selection, a constructive faculty not equalled among the men of this century." Selection for what? And construction of what? Balzac seems for pages at a time to have forgotten that there is such a thing as selection, becoming what Henley called him, "an inspired auctioneer" taking an inventory. But sooner or later the profoundly significant detail is given us, and when it is we are put in possession of something beyond the conception of Dumas. The construction with Balzac, if we look at his work a piece at a time, is usually careless and sometimes clumsy, but in the end what is constructed is nothing less than the Human Comedy, a world larger and with greater heights and profounder depths and more intricate labyrinths than any other novelist has given us.

* *

But Henley, sharp-eyed as he was, was at the mercy of his temperament. A valiant, swaggering adventurer himself, he could not help over-rating writers who conquered a territory of literature by force of muscle and of cudgel or sword, and he could not help under-valuing those in whom there was no desire to enter the pushing crowd as one of it. To Thackeray he would allow hardly anything except immense skill as a writer. His protest against the pettiness of most of Thackeray's satire was just enough. It is snobbish to be so observant of snobbery; it is mean to be so alert in detection of meanness; and, a very damaging consideration, the end of all that is falsehood to life. Balzac knew better when he showed us the almost lyrical rapture of the

miser in miserliness, of the gross person in grossness. The natures that harbour those little vices dwelt upon by Thackeray, they too have their ecstasies, and see their dirty little schemes as glorious strategy. If Henley had looked into Carlyle's letters he would have found a lament that contemporary dramatists had nothing which seemed "glorious and musical" to them. It was a wise complaint, and someone might have given it another shape for the benefit of Thackeray. It might have been represented to him, who was reverent enough of virtue, that even human vices have their dignity, without recognition of which no novelist will be dealing fairly with life.

* *

Another trouble with Thackeray which Henley perhaps did not perceive was the extreme, the really intolerable, simplicity of his conception of conscience. Henley called Colonel Newcome the offspring of Don Quixote out of Little Nell, which was well enough; but he might have found a sharp phrase for the quite mechanical response of so many of Thackeray's characters to a voice which seems less the voice of the character's own conscience than the command of some external, conventional authority. And even in writing of Tolstoy, who at his best had so rare a feeling for the way in which conscience works, Henley is heedless of this matter of motive. He is really happier in the world of Fielding, where the usual animal impulses act vigorously, under check of the magistracy. Good, hearty rebellious flesh and a sound work-a-day morality to correct it as far as may be, and if not very far, no matter: that is material the handling of which by a novelist he can best judge.

* *

But no; there is something of which he is more than a mere judge, of which he is the perfect connoisseur. The most eloquent passage of prose Henley ever wrote was in eulogy of 'The Arabian Nights.' "He that has the book of the Thousand Nights and a Night has Hachisch-made-words for life," it begins. It was that vast extravaganza of passion in action and picarooning farce and material splendour run mad which meant most to Henley, naturally. The elements of humour and fantasy in the fatalism of the stories, the mingling of voluptuousness and farce, the alternations of felicity on silken cushions and the bastinado, were very much to such a reader; and he is, I think, the only critic who has seen the full value of the figure of Haroun. The fantastic revels proceed under the shadow of a monarch as capricious and almost as powerful as the Almighty, and their wildest delights and most extravagant moments of farce gain by the contrast of that lonely figure, towering above all in "the tedium of supremacy."

* *

Since Henley so well saw the value of that contrast, it is strange that he had no word to say of the contrast, contrived *à rebours*, at which Balzac laboured. Around the base of the Human Comedy there runs a frieze of absurd, excessive, often obscene figures in the complications of fanciful intrigue. It is to throw into greater relief the Human Comedy, but it is not great enough to do that. Perhaps it is rather too much willed for a deliberately chosen purpose, done in completion of one of those elaborate and rigid schemes which the French mind is apt to propose to itself. Whatever the cause, it has not achieved the purpose. Henley should have noted the failure in an attempt congenial to him.

STET.

REVIEWS

JOHN RUSKIN

BY CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

The Tragedy of John Ruskin. By Amabel Williams-Ellis. Cape. 12s. 6d.

THERE were so many tragedies of John Ruskin that it is difficult to know where to begin. There was the tragedy of the many women whom he loved and the tragedy of the wife whom he did not love. There was the tragedy of the father, that "entirely honest merchant," of the Manichæan mother and of the little boy who was allowed no toy except "a bunch of keys." There was the tremendous, dominating tragedy of that last madness. Yet in an irreverent age the temptation is irresistible to say that the real tragedy of John Ruskin was that he ever imagined himself to be an art-critic.

Mrs. Williams-Ellis is continually complaining that Ruskin's æsthetics are spoiled by his sermons. It is in no spirit of mere perversity that I record my own feeling that his sermons are always being spoiled by his æsthetics. Mrs. Williams-Ellis admits herself that his taste was often at fault (it would be hard not to admit it) and, quite apart from the faults of his taste, he was curiously incapable of doing intellectual justice to his own æsthetic theories. In the 'Seven Lamps of Architecture,' for instance, he states his famous theory of architectural truth so very clumsily that Mr. Geoffrey Scott in 'The Architecture of Humanism' has had no difficulty in exposing him by showing up his self-contradictions. Yet, when the shouting has died down, we feel that Gothic architecture was not such a silly business as Mr. Scott's attack makes it out to be—if you like, that it was not such a silly business as Ruskin's defence made it out to be. What is it then, we wonder, that both Mr. Scott and Ruskin have missed? And the answer surely is that Ruskin, curiously muddled as he was as an art-critic, was yet certainly right in his feeling that, somehow or other, good art was founded on honest living. The miss who carries off the Sunday-school prize is not, it is true, necessarily the greatest poet, and it is a doctrine at which it is easy and fashionable to poke fun. Yet Ruskin was surely right in feeling that somehow the Good and the Beautiful must be related. He praised the Gothic and he hated the Renaissance and all the rest of it—and he afterwards invented a lot of reasons, many of them bad ones, for doing so. But what was really at the back of his mind all the time was, I believe, a feeling that had very little to do with art, a feeling that the age of Giotto with all its violence and crudity was yet fundamentally a good age and that the age of Michel Angelo with all its magnificence and its praise of the strong man was yet fundamentally a weak and hollow age.

Marcel Proust has written of him:

Nous pouvons oublier aujourd'hui les services qu'il a rendus à Hunt, à Rossetti, à Millais, mais ce qu'il a fait pour Giotto, pour Carpaccio, pour Bellini, nous le pouvons pas. Son œuvre divine ne fut pas de susciter les vivants mais de resusciter les morts.

This is true and we owe Ruskin a great debt because he did really rub into our heads at least the names of some of those pre-Raphaelites who, with their other eccentricities, combined that of actually living before Raphael. Yet his actual æsthetic philosophy was one which, if it had been applied, would certainly have made all pre-Raphaelite art entirely impossible. He demanded of the artist "simple, *bona fide* imitation of Nature."

"Go to Nature," he wrote, "in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thoughts but how best to penetrate

her meaning and remember her instruction; rejecting nothing, selecting nothing and scorning nothing; believing all things to be right and good and rejoicing always in the truth." What rot it all is! Just a gabble-gabble-gabble of words! "Selecting nothing?" This is the æsthetic philosophy which produced Mr. James Joyce and Miss Gertrude Stein, not that which produced Carpaccio, Bellini and Giotto. Yet the gabble all served a useful purpose. It is probable that Ruskin, for instance, grossly overrated Tintoretto. Yet Tintoretto, if not the king among painters, was yet a very proper stick with which to beat Victorian society for its Philistine vulgarity.

I wish that Mrs. Williams-Ellis had thrown Ruskin, the art-critic, overboard somewhat more frankly than she has done. For Ruskin, the politician, was, I think, a more interesting man, and it is at any rate on the politician that Mrs. Williams-Ellis is particularly happy. Really there is but one comment to be made on Ruskin's political writings—and that the platitudinous one that it is a great pity that he was not sane. What could be more lucid than this early attack on indirect taxation?

All European nations are precisely in this respect acting as an individual would do who, disliking (as it is natural for all men to dislike) to pay his rent on quarter-day, should go to his landlord and say, "Sir, it is painful to my feelings to pay my rent in this straightforward and visible manner. If you could conveniently let your steward watch at my house-door and make my cook pay him so much a pound on all the meat that comes into the house, it would be much pleasanter for me, and I would pay the steward for his extra trouble."

What a pity that such a style should have been degraded into the poor ravings with which much of 'Fors Clavigera' is filled! Nor did the coming of madness rob Ruskin merely of his sense of consequence. It robbed him also of a much more important thing, of his sense of charity. "Ruskin's political message to the cultured society of his day," writes Mr. Shaw, "began and ended in this simple judgment, 'You are a parcel of thieves.'" It is all too true. Obsessed with a persecution-mania, this poor madman learnt to hate the rich, but he never learnt to love the poor.

The most illuminating pages of Mrs. Williams-Ellis's book are those in which she draws a very interesting comparison and contrast between Ruskin and Lenin. She says that the revolutionaries always distrusted Ruskin because they felt that his spirit was still the spirit of the upper middle class. I would put the point more positively. I think that they felt that the degradation of the poor was to him all but a convenience which gave him an admirable excuse for abusing the rich. Ruskin spent a great deal of time in praising the things that he thought the poor ought to want. Can anyone quote a single sentence of his in praise of any of the things that the poor actually do want?

In some ways Ruskin was a great servant of that Victorian vulgarity which he set himself out to destroy. Utilitarian England did at least allow to the working man a crude kind of liberty. For that reason, if for no other, he was willing to tolerate it. Ruskin, in the violence of his attack on every aspect of the society of which he was a member, denounced English liberty as savagely as ever he denounced English vulgarity. Doing so, he almost persuaded the Englishman that vulgarity was a necessary part of freedom. Mrs. Williams-Ellis tells us that:

Ruskin will not allow young people a licence to marry unless they have several years' good character to show. Then they shall be saluted with the title of Bachelor and Rosière and granted the privilege of marriage,

and he himself, in 'Fors Clavigera,' is even less compromising as he sketches out his ideal commonwealth:

We will have no liberty upon it; but instant obedience to known law and appointed persons; no equality upon it; but recognition of every betterness that we can find and reprobation of every worseness.

Who would buy a taste for Tintoretto at such a price? When Ruskin was a young man a very wise Swiss guide said of him "Le pauvre enfant, il ne sait pas vivre."

The penalty for writing a very interesting and very excellent book is that the critic talks about the subject rather than the author. It is a penalty which, I fear, Mrs. Williams-Ellis has had to pay.

THE SCHUBERT CENTENARY

Franz Schubert and his Times. By Karl Kobald. Translated from the German by Beatrice Marshall. Knopf. 21s.

Franz Schubert's Letters and Other Writings. Edited by Otto Erich Deutsch, and translated by Venetia Savile. With a foreword by Ernest Newman. Faber and Gwyer. 6s.

Schubert's Songs. By Richard Capell. Ernest Benn. 18s.

Music and Letters. Schubert Number, October, 1928. 3s.

OF all composers, Franz Schubert is the one least in need of the special attentions which it is our not unadmirable fashion to accord to famous men one hundred years after their death. For Schubert's music has never suffered any eclipse, such as cast a shadow upon Bach and Handel, Mozart and Haydn, and even upon Beethoven, whose centenary arrived just in time to counteract a senseless denigration. On the biographical side, too, there are no new facts of importance, because Schubert never did anything of note except pour out his incessant stream of melody. Modern frankness has brought out for all to read the fact that Schubert suffered from a venereal disease. But apart from the fact that this illness probably contributed largely to the breakdown of his health and his early death, the knowledge of it has no intrinsic importance. Those who delight in emphasizing this kind of incident in the lives of great men might do better to remember that sermon of Donne's, wherein he says:

Let me whither in a spittle under sharpe, and foule, and infamous diseases, and so recompence the wantonnesse of my youth, with that loathsomnesse in mine age; yet, if God withdraw not his spirituall blessings All this that is temporall, is but a caterpillar got into one corner of my garden, but a mill-dew fallen upon one acre of my Corne; the body of all, the substance of all is safe, as long as the soule is safe.

If anyone's soul is safe, surely that of the gentle, kindly Franz runs no risk, even from the jackals of journalism.

Yet, though there is nothing new to add to his biography, and little to alter in the general assessment of his music, there is always scope for the judgments of new and original minds upon any great theme. The danger is that special celebrations on a given date tempt some writers to trap an unwary public with the bait of a *rechauffé* hot-pot dished up for the occasion.

Among the books with which I am at the moment concerned there is nothing of that dishonest class. Of them all Herr Kobald's is the least good. It ought to be the best, for it sets out to paint a picture of Vienna in the days of Schubert, setting the composer in a living environment. But it is unfortunately written in so frothy a style, and the translation is in some respects so untrustworthy, that I confess to having failed to read it right through. Some quotations shall be my justification. When a writer begins his chapter upon Schubert's work with the words: "If the genius of Schubert as an artist was of a grandeur and prodigality unexampled in the history of music . . ." we know at once that he has not the beginnings of a knowledge of the meanings of words, nor any sense of proportion. "Grandeur" is certainly not the first

quality that strikes one in Schubert's music, which is generally the reverse of grand. He could rise to noble heights of dignity in songs like 'Die Allmacht' and in some of his orchestral works, but even these are not "unexampled" (if by that the translator means "unparalleled") in the history of music. "Prodigality" we may grant Herr Kobald, but even in that Schubert was at least matched by Haydn and Mozart on statistics, and can we really say that Beethoven and Wagner and Verdi were less prodigal? Then, again, the book is packed with such statements as:

A masterpiece of song is 'Auf dem Wasser zu singen,' the words by, etc., and his charming 'An die Natur' and 'Daphne am Bach.'

This tells us nothing and is an indication that the author has nothing to tell. The translator seems to be ignorant of the rudiments of music, for she mistakes sharp for flat and does not realize that the Germans call "B flat" "B," and "B" "H." So we get astonishing results:

The powerful mass in E sharp major, in the solemn Sanctus of which . . . effects are reached equal to those in Beethoven's great mass and in Bach's mass in H minor.

Yet buried beneath this surface of loose statements and inaccuracies there is a solid mass of interesting information about Schubert and the Vienna of his day.

Miss Savile's translation of Schubert's scanty letters and other writings is, on the other hand, accurate and in excellent English. The letters themselves have not the intrinsic interest which makes such good reading of the correspondence of Beethoven or Mozart. They go to confirm the accepted view of the composer's character and of his relations with his friends. One would be very sorry to have to undertake the deduction from this evidence of any important information about the writer, which Mr. Newman suggests to future critics in his preface. Nevertheless this is a valuable addition to the Schubert bibliography in English, and Mr. Newman is as individual and as interesting as ever in his views.

Mr. Capell provides the most solid contribution to the discussion of Schubert's art. His analysis of the songs is something more than an *ad hoc* essay of ephemeral worth. Indeed, it must have been the labour of many years and is certainly the outcome of a close knowledge of the whole of the songs, which few men can boast. Apart from a certain contortion in the writing, his chapter on Schubert's style is as fine a piece of musical criticism as I have read. The comparison of Schubert to Hugo Wolf, the remarks on the influence of Beethoven, the discussion of the translation question and its effect upon the *tempo* of the songs, and the section dealing with the relationship between voice and accompaniment are a few of the things which strike me as particularly worth mention. With the one or two exceptions, like Plunket Greene and Stuart Wilson, no English singer can afford to attempt Schubert's songs in future without having studied this chapter and the detailed discussion of the individual songs. Then, if he has a conscience, the singer will probably withdraw himself for long meditation and longer practice before venturing upon the concert-platform again.

Mr. Fox Strangways has collected in the Schubert Number of *Music and Letters* a number of essays by distinguished musicians and critics, among them Professor Tovey, Herr Otto Erich Deutsch, Mr. Colles and himself. It is noticeable that the songs occupy the greater part of these essays, even as they have inspired the best of the books. This fact lends it mute support to the view that whatever delight we may take in the beauty of his instrumental music—and how lovable in their tenderness and charm and humour are the octet and the best of the symphonies and of the sonatas, and at times how grand!—it is upon the infinite variety of his songs that Schubert's fame is most securely established.

DYNELEY HUSSEY

CAVE ART

The Art of the Cave Dweller: A Study of the Earliest Artistic Activities of Man. By G. Baldwin Brown. Murray. 18s.

ASTOUNDING is the only word for the neglect of primitive cave-art among artists, thinkers and students of humanity. Here is an art which has a perfect mastery of line; which, as Herbert Kuhn truly pointed out, has grasped all the æsthetic problems of light, atmosphere, movement and mass achieved by modern Impressionism; which is based on the freshest and most intimate knowledge of wild nature, and is so universal and deathless in its appeal that we at one end of civilization can refresh ourselves in a power of creation that emerged before man had a ghost of a notion as to what civilization meant.

Important indeed, then, is the republication of Professor Baldwin Brown's Munro Lectures at Edinburgh University. He does not allow learning to obscure his appreciation of values, and goes cheerfully forward upsetting apple-carts by the dozen, by the hundred. Though this wise and discriminating book is sometimes a little heavy-handed and redundant, no review can attempt to compass more than a fraction of the wide issues it unrolls like a scroll of human mysteries in the hands of an old-time seer. Apart from his main contentions, even the Professor only lifts corners of the veil that hides so vast a landscape of the relations between life, art and history. What signify Egyptian head-dresses on the hair of "Cro-Magnon" women whose men used harpoons of the Egyptian type and lay in death with Red Sea shells to guard them through the shades? What has the noble early Aurignacian La Grèze Bison, whose drawing corresponds with the Egyptian convention of a full-face eye in a profile view of the head, to tell us? Yet these primitives in their full artistic development accomplished the sense of mass which neither the Egyptians nor the Greeks nor the Romans ever did except by accident. Not until the Renaissance was drawing in three dimensions mastered again. So much for the crude ideas of evolutionary progress in technical power rampant among archæologists.

Theories about this art are roughly divisible into two camps. The first, inherited from the Tylorian speculations of last century about the savage, reinforced by psycho-analysis, postulates the origins, incentive and purpose of cave-art as magical; parietal art was a fearful and malign rite, practised by a proto-Ku Klux Klan in the dark depths of the caves and enforced by a religious autocracy of which the famous "Sorcerer of Les Trois Frères," a caperer dressed in a stag's hide and horns, was a characteristic hierophant. The practical answers to this fantasy-weaving are fourfold. To mix art and magic is usually fatal to the former, as the degeneration of pictorial art in Neolithic times amply demonstrates. Next, the data upon which the Tylorians build their surmises are all susceptible of a much simpler and more immediate explanation. The Trois Frères sorcerer, for instance, is not more than the leader in what has every appearance of being a mimetic animal dance. Thirdly, the incorrigible confusion between savage and primitive again confronts us. Because our origins are presumed upon the Tylorian hypothesis to lie back in various savage rituals, no distinction is ever drawn between the savage and the primitive, between people in a degraded and stagnant mould of post-civilized law and custom and people with no civilization at all. Fourthly, there is no evidence of the glooms of mumbo-jumbo in the happy creative spirit of these artist-huntsmen. The cave-man, according to Professor Brown and the more recent investigations of primitive behaviour all over the world, was unwarlike, gentle in temperament, generous in his dealings and

very considerate to women, who were the equals of the men. The hidebound cruelties of savages were not yet.

The second theory regards cave-art as entirely divorced from utility and practical existence, and was born of the Victorian dichotomy between the artist and the man of affairs, a theory ridiculed by Gilbert and Sullivan and strenuously combated by William Morris. On the one hand your world's worker, on the other your dreamer of dreams, the hothouse bloom the Empire-builder kept in his conservatory for an idle hour. According to this theory, the cave-artist was a delicate weakling who lived for art while his fellows saw to their dinner.

Professor Brown rejects both these baseless speculations by steering between them and extracting the little nutriment from the much pulp of each of them. The magical theory presupposes a practical purpose in the sense that the representation of animals was a means to ensuring their capture. The Professor strips off the magic from this view and relates it both to the imitative faculty and the confusion between image and original, both of which are indisputable phenomena of primitive psychology. He shows how the artist took advantage of an accidental natural resemblance to an animal on a rock-face to improve upon and finally recreate it as a living thing of which the creator was parent and master. By confounding in some degree the representative with the original animal, the artist transferred his power from the one to the other. In that sense primitive art had a utilitarian background, and was intimately related to maintaining the needs of daily existence. But in the act of giving life to the inanimate wall, with its occasional dim suggestion of life, the artist lost sight of his end and stimulus in the joys and ardours of creation, the expression of his personality and the bodying forth into a living reality of his mental images. He passed from an aim of practical utility into the rapt if unconscious contemplation of ideal beauty, and so secured the due balance between pure Impressionism and photographic accuracy. Bread and butter, so to speak, began it, but the heavens finished off the job.

To my mind this is the just view of primitive art and contains unmeasured possibilities of a truer reading of the remote past than any yet put forward.

H. J. M.

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THE SOCIOLOGICAL CONTRACT

The Learned Knife. By Lawrence Hyde.
Gerald Howe. 12s. 6d.

ECONOMIC man is born eugenically, and everywhere he is psychologically adjusted. We cannot seriously dispute the internal efficiency of modern science, and if its assumptions are correct we are faced with some such conclusion as this. But now that nearly everything so far measurable in human affairs has been measured and is self-evidently not sufficient to explain, define or direct one-third of the life of the most bestial community, it seems almost worth while to examine, as Mr. Hyde examines, the nature and basis of these assumptions and to establish, as Mr. Hyde suggests, a permanent critique of values to prevent the future maltreatment of plain men.

"The learned knife" is a scornful metaphor of Dostoevsky's for the academic attempt to consider social problems apart from the moral ideals which are their complement in the organic state, and its use as a title shows Mr. Hyde's line of attack on science in general and sociology in particular. Scientists are observing with a derelict theory. The "quantitative" approach to reality and that restricted portion of reality which it approaches are both dependent on the materialist philosophy which once served an economic purpose, never provided a satisfactory account of reality, and is now generally discredited. But because it has not been replaced and still has the support of the last generation but one it exercises very considerable influence. A sociologist approaches human life through its measurable aspects. He is confined by his methods to the measurement of spent forces and then further restricted by his methods to their least complex and most general aspects. Statistical conclusions, therefore, are not generalizations of human affairs so much as statements of minor and incidental factors, arbitrarily selected because they happen to be common and measurable. Statisticians, if they were as perfect as their methods allowed them to be, and were aware of their own limitations, would fulfil a small and useful purpose. As it is they are, for the most part, little more than demented calculating machines.

This is Mr. Hyde's general line, and we consider it justified. The social sciences enjoy an exaggerated prestige, and their smaller practitioners have no idea of the limitations of their method. It is time that we decided, for instance, whether men are, without limitation, economic animals and whether measurable factors take as important a place in human affairs as they are now supposed to take. It seems likely that eugenics would eliminate most exceptional intellectual ability, and that psychology, by establishing neural balance, would eliminate the rest. It seems certain (and here is the key) that the general tendency of sociological opinion is towards destroying complex or immeasurable factors. Sociological science is an inapplicable abstraction from half of life; so, now, is morality. What is the cause of this? *The Learned Knife*. Here is a magnificent opportunity for a constructive philosopher. A few sociologists are already attempting to define their own province and to reintegrate sociology with its inseparable moral concomitants. If the philosophers who lately have been idle or obstructive would reduce their knowledge to some sort of order, define from a philosophical point of view the nature of statistical material, and consider the possibility of inventing a scientific notation which would make possible the introduction of philosophy into statistics without disturbing their mathematical nature, they would revolutionize society. Mr. Hyde here is disappointing. He pleads for a more intuitive outlook, he criticizes the few sociologists who are really facing the problem, he is pleased to find them unable to solve it, and that is all. The problem is certainly soluble.

Philosophy and science cannot long remain apart. The main problem is the muddled condition of philosophy, and if the musicians can trap fluid inspirations in measurable symbols there seems no reason why anyone else should pretend to be unable to do so.

THE YOUNGEST DRAMA

Three Plays. By H. R. Lenormand. Translated by D. L. Orna. Gollancz. 10s. 6d.

Hoppla. A Play by Ernst Toller. English version by Hermon Ould. Benn. 6s.

IT was Ibsen who, by making the science of ethics once more the province of the dramatist, suggested to his successors, of whom Mr. Shaw has been the most notable, that since conduct is conditioned by finance, it is only logical to carry drama from ethics into economics. Hence 'Widowers' Houses,' hence 'The Voysey Inheritance,' and 'The Madras House.' Then, while Mr. Shaw was turning for stage purposes from economics to biology, Pirandello was laying hands on metaphysics and using for purposes of comedy the familiar questions and quibbles about reality which have been echoing in philosophical class-rooms since the days of the Greek sophists. It is little wonder, then, with this constant following up of science and philosophy, that the new psychology should be allowed to take the stage along with the old, in which good was good and will was will and naughtiness was a simple miscreant to be whipped when identified.

Lenormand has specialized in preparing for the "advanced" Parisian stage his expositions and commentaries on Freudian doctrine. He is the dramatist of the sub-conscious; he studies evil as a disease and he is perfectly ready to make an inhibition his first murderer or to substitute the sublimation of a complex for the old "peripety" of the Greek recipe. In 'Le Mangeur des Rêves' he restates the *Œdipus* story from a feminine point of view and in terms of modern psycho-analysis. But he does not stop there; he goes on to imply that the practitioner of the new craft may do far more harm than good, that probing about in people's memories may bring a fatal remorse instead of a promised relief, and that the man who tackles this job is not necessarily an unselfish renderer of a supreme service but may be himself a serious case of morbid curiosity. 'The Dream Doctor' is an inadequate rendering for the title of this very interesting play, since it entirely misses the note of gloating over and exploitation of the patient's tragic experience which gives to the piece its curious and powerful ending. The seeming prophet of psycho-analysis turns on his darling cause and puts it in the pillory.

'Man and his Phantoms' is another strange and effective restatement. This time Don Juan is first put under analysis and then submitted to the psychological inquisition of a spiritualist séance. The dramatist's purpose here becomes somewhat involved and it is not clear to what extent he means his ghosts to be ghosts indeed and how far they are merely abstractions and ideas. Lenormand has broken finally with the old technique of the theatre and he works out his plays in a formless series of tableaux. Of the sufficiency of this method stage-presentation alone is a fair test. Like M. J.-J. Bernard he practises the theory of silences to increase the dramatic pressure of speech. What the reading of his plays confirms is that he has been a useful and a daring innovator in his application of psychology to play-making and that he brings to his method a bold and a subtle mind. London has already seen three or four of his pieces in occasional productions, but none of those here printed. Mr. Gollancz's decision to

introduce him more thoroughly to the English public is fully justified.

The "note to producer" of Toller's new play announces that "all the scenes of the play can be played on a scaffolding divided into several floors; the necessary changes can be made without changing the structure. In theatres where a kinematograph apparatus is impracticable, the film interludes may be left out or simple lantern-pictures substituted." Toller evidently believes that the theatre ought not only to imitate the technique of the film in speed and variety of scenic change but should borrow from the film itself and bind up its recent wounds with a bandage of celluloid. We cannot for a moment accept this surrender. The chief strength of the theatre lies in its appeal to the imagination; the kinema, by leaving nothing out, leaves nothing to the privacy play of the spectator's mind. Toller, by dragging in the film, simply overdoes all his effects. If he wishes to inform us of the not very startling truth that we live in a mechanized world, he apparently expresses his inability to do so as a dramatist by announcing feebly "Black Out. Kinematograph Interlude. City 1927. Trams. Motor-cars. Underground Railways. Aeroplane." If the playwright cannot express himself through his own medium of the acted word, he really should give the business up and retire quietly instead of making a public spectacle of his abdication in favour of the kinema.

'Hoppla! Wir sie leben' is a left-wing Labour cartoon of right-wing Labour "careerism." It has energy and at least enough imaginative quality to make one wish that Toller would not rely so much on stage-device and film-tactics. His villain, the ex-revolutionary who becomes a toady and a bully in office, is not impossible, and his hero, who keeps to faith and loses his life, is a living person and not a mere shadow of Socialist priggishness. Toller's complete surrender to the rickety-rackety, scaffold-and-kinema school of production is a genuine pity, because he has shown in the past and still shows a real gift of characterization along with the mingled poetry and politics of his humanism.

IMPERIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Empire Government. By Manfred Nathan. Allen and Unwin. 10s.

MR. GALSWORTHY, who has cultivated a cunning for detecting each new development within his age, suggests that the post-war period has been marked by an increasing interest in the Empire. This modern Imperial Consciousness has a quality which is new in international politics. It is devoid of the self-seeking aggressiveness so characteristic of the colonial policies of Western European nations in the eighteenth century. The pride of possession as such has largely disappeared. Instead we find a wide realization of England's kinship with the Dominions and of the paramount importance and responsibility of the English-speaking peoples in the maintenance of world peace and stability. Meanwhile the constitution of the Empire, ever more a gesture than a formula, has been modernized and adjusted to existing conditions. Of primary importance were the resolutions of the Imperial Conference of 1926 whose significance has not permeated as yet to the popular imagination. As Professor Alfred Zimmern has said, "We hardly realize what a tremendous venture of faith the decisions of that Conference involve, or what a revolution in hitherto accepted canons of political practice." It may be that the findings of the Statutory Commission for the revision of the Indian Constitution will lead to equally far-reaching results.

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MISILLUSTRATION

Selected Poems of Swinburne. Illustrated by Harry Clarke. The Bodley Head. 21s.

SWINBURNE is the least pictorial, the most abstract of our great poets: all in him that does admit of illustration is that early work done under the transient influence of Morris and Rossetti, and already illustrated, partly in anticipation, by Rossetti, by Simeon Solomon, and by Frederick Sandys. If, nevertheless, he is to be illustrated, the artist should be one who can imaginatively share the whole experience of the author of 'Erechtheus' as well as 'Chastelard,' 'Hertha' and the prelude to the 'Songs Before Sunrise' as well as 'Dolores' and 'Anactoria,' 'A Nympholept,' as well as 'Faustine,' the Border Ballads and 'Balén' as well as 'At a Month's End.' Mr. Clarke, who is a capable but derivative worker in the tradition of Beardsley and Mr. Sime, obviously responds to nothing in Swinburne except a few of the first 'Poems and Ballads,' and to those in complete misunderstanding of their spirit. Mr. Wolfe, confessing that he had not seen the drawings when he wrote his preface, very properly dissociates himself from Mr. Clarke's interpretation. His own, according to which Swinburne handled pitch in a sort of excited boyish ignorance, and was left with hands clean except for a slight aureate stain, genius having transmuted pitch to gold, is honourable though not quite satisfactory. But Mr. Clarke, no doubt in good faith, has committed the outrage of reversing what Swinburne did, and, despite Mr. Wolfe, did in perfect consciousness of what he was about: he has translated back into cold lust, and coldness is the characteristic of lust, what Swinburne had rescued and revived and redeemed by poetic passion. These chill, still, industriously erotic, wearily elaborated, rather foppish drawings are ludicrously inappropriate as illustrations of an electrical poetry. We can only hope that they will end the pestilential trade in illustrated Christmas editions of the poets.

Were any poet but Swinburne the victim, we should be confident of that result, since here is something more of a misfit than even the worst of innumerable bad illustrated editions of Omar. But Swinburne, for all that two or three critics have done in the last few years, is very generally misapprehended; and mainly, it is pertinent to point out, for lack of what so voluminous a poet needs, a soundly chosen volume of selections. The very well-printed selection that lies before us is not merely "dished by the plates"; even without Mr. Clarke's illustrations it would be open to many objections. It is unsatisfactory as a selection even from the first 'Poems and Ballads'; it is absurd as a selection from the general body of his poetry.

NEW FICTION

By L. P. HARTLEY

The Pathway. By Henry Williamson. Cape. 7s. 6d.

The Closed Garden. By Julian Green. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

Humdrum. By Harold Acton. Chatto and Windus. 7s. 6d.

Joseph and His Brethren. By H. W. Freeman. Chatto and Windus. 7s. 6d.

'THE PATHWAY' is an extraordinary book. At first it seems a novel about men written for animals. "Wilderness," the house in Devonshire where most of the action takes place, is a sort of sanctuary for wild creatures. There is a large number of dogs:

Jean rated and beat them away, but Billjohn avoided her, and marking the bird in a corner, seized it in his mouth, turned round and began to walk with casual steps towards his master. Jean was holding Dane and Jock, and Benjamin was astride Coalie, while at a finger-lift Rigmarole, the water-spaniel, had crouched at Mr. Chychester's feet.

The dogs are tremendously petted and indulged; they are never out of sight or out of mind and all their movements, pricking of ears and wagging of tails, are chronicled. I confess to a feeling of satisfaction when the barbarian, Mr. Chychester, observes that a dog's proper place is the kennel, and he does not mind where the brute sleeps so long as he has a bed. However, there are many nice dogs. But are wasps nice, or wood-lice? The characters in Mr. Williamson's story are full of obligation and friendship towards them:

A wasp's nest was hung near the apex of the arch of the wooden gate, a grey and brittle globe of dry wood-pulp which must not be disturbed . . . the nest belonged to Uncle Sulf, and no one must so much as strike at a wasp, lest his friend the queen be injured.

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This may be thought a rather tepid patronage of the wasp. The wood-louse arouses deeper emotions, the instinct of self-sacrifice:

"Oh, look!" cried Miss Chychester, concern in her voice, as she pointed to a wood-louse, crawling on a log in the fire. Maddison saw it instantly, and putting his hand in the flame, calmly picked it off the wood.

Maddison is the hero of the story, a visionary, an idealist, a poet. His nerves have been ruined in the war, and he is full of bitterness against the condition of things that made the war possible. He dislikes fox-hunting men and Philistines and is as rude as possible to them when occasion offers. He is engaged on a prose-work, 'The Sun-born,' which apparently advocates some sort of Return to Nature, Nature as typified by the swallow.

It seems to me that birds, such as swallows, are superior to us in many ways, because they do not think but just accept.

The fundamental fault, I think, is in considering all wild things as lower, that is inferior, living creatures; whereas many are higher than man, and all are pure. There is no devil, in the moral sense, among wild birds and animals: no meanness, either. There are closest links between the spirits of men and birds; and the source of their god is the same: it is derived from the age-long care and regard for their young.

When children are allowed to grow naturally, and un-repressed, they will not be over-imaginative or precociously desirous about sex, and young men will be natural.

My immediate task is to co-ordinate the spirit of Christ with that of Lenin—the two philosophies are related, and the complement of each other. Both show a way of life that is reasonable and natural.

Maddison's ideas cease to be convincing directly he formulates them; they shocked inexpressibly the conventional Mrs. Ogilvie, who gave the wanderer shelter in her Zoo-like home and to whose daughter Mary he paid court. But as a man, of the stamp of Shelley, or Alyosha, fired and consumed by urgent spiritual longings, he is much more convincing; he has the tiresomeness of the fanatic and the impracticality of the saint. He would have been a hopeless husband; he was, as someone cruelly said, "slack-twisted," and the sorry figure he cuts in the matters of ordinary life make one the more impatient with his grandiloquent sentiments. But it is his presence which gives the book its essentially English and romantic and Gothic character. 'The Pathway' is quite unlike most contemporary fiction with its hard bright even surface, its monotony of mood, its carefully considered scheme. It is like a landscape by moonlight, full of mysterious distances and objects of varying visibility. And yet it is not indefinite or woolly. There are half-a-dozen characters very sharply drawn, scores of separate scenes that are as individual and formal as a melody. And the emotion and expression of emotion have a flute-like quality (birdlike I will not say) sad and touching and pure. The book seems to be the product of an imagination amateurish and uncertain of itself, not always on good terms with the intellect, but omnipresent, steeping everything in its peculiar hue. Only in the *dénouement* does it fail Mr. Williamson. This is an unfortunate scene. Shelley has already been mentioned too often; to imitate the circumstances of his death was most unwise, and to recite Swinburne in the neighbourhood of the corpse in the highest degree theatrical, a conclusion unworthy of a beautiful, moving, and original book. It is no good saying that it was in Warbeck's nature to quote Swinburne; in the interests of art he should have been prevented.

'The Closed Garden' is an entirely different type of novel. It is French and derives from Balzac. It is definite, condensed, intense. The story is not made to illustrate anything outside itself; it thrives, it gathers power, from its exclusions. Like many French novels it is life-like in detail, very unlike life in general plan. The scene is the typical French provincial town with which one is familiar—a town that has many of the qualities of a prison, a mad-house, and a tomb. From such towns one knows

the victim will never get away; she will rob, murder and commit suicide from ennui, but she will not take the next train to Paris, unless to go upon its streets. The fact is, in scenes of French provincial life the people are too miserly to spend money on a train fare. Of the two sisters in 'The Closed Garden,' however, the consumptive one does make a clean bolt. The other, Adrienne, remains with her impossible father, who suspects her of a clandestine love-affair. And he is partly right: she is utterly infatuated by a neighbouring doctor, to whom she has never spoken; and she goes out at night in the hopes of catching a fleeting glimpse of him. Finally she pushes the father, by accident, downstairs. Her sinister friend, Madame Legras, the nature of whose profession all but Adrienne seem aware of, arranges the inquest so that the daughter shall escape suspicion of murder. Always feeble-minded, Adrienne begins to believe she did kill her father: this thought, united to her ever-growing passion for the doctor, drives her further towards insanity. Finally, having avowed her love to the astonished physician, and having been black-mailed by Madame Legras and robbed of her dowry, she goes mad. It is an incredible story; but Mr. Green takes it all for granted and is so convinced himself of its reality that he wins us into an unwilling suspension of disbelief. His knowledge of the symptoms of neurasthenia is amazing and uncomfortable. As a work of art 'The Closed Garden' is a success; it demonstrates how little the novel need owe to verisimilitude.

Mr. Acton satirizes modern life—modern life as it is lived in certain Bohemian circles in London, and by smart people in London, Paris and New York. His theme is excellent—the contrast in the fate of two sisters, one who begins disreputably and ends respectably, the other whose life takes the opposite course. Mr. Acton has considerable talent both for character-drawing and for satire; he has, moreover, a colourful and amusing, though a rather distorted and uncertain sense of words. His vocabulary needs the discipline of verse. He often achieves wit, though not as often as he strains after it. The defect of 'Humdrum' as a whole is inconsistency of outlook; the author does not maintain the satirist's aloofness, he comes down and mingles in the fray. And he knocks down his Aunt Sallies before they are in position. 'Humdrum' is an unequal book; but the author writes with gusto, and may achieve something when he has stabilized his style.

'Joseph and His Brethren' is the chronicle of life on a Suffolk farm. Joseph, his father, and his five step-brothers subdue an unpromising piece of land. The story has no special psychological interest; the five brothers are insufficiently distinguished from each other; they seem like five aspects of the same person. But Mr. Freeman is very handy with East Anglian dialect and his knowledge of the technique of nineteenth-century farming must be unrivalled.

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The Tramp's Anthology. Edited by Stephen Graham. Davies. 6s.

MR. GRAHAM'S object in compiling this book was, as he confesses in the introduction, to induce as many as possible of his readers to take up their "heavy, solid boots" and say: "I will not waste this day; I will not even sit down reading this anthology, but put it in my pocket and take it out when lark song is in my ears." That rather self-conscious attitude towards the business of walking—or rather "tramping," as Mr. Graham prefers to call it—is reiterated in only very few of the selections from prose and verse which make up his anthology. Here are Richard Jefferies, W. H. Hudson, Rupert Brooke, Viscount Grey of Fallodon, Mr. Belloc, Mr. Vachel Lindsay (a "tramp" after the author's own heart), and a plentiful sprinkling of the writings of Mr. Graham himself. The subject is so vast, and Mr. Graham by his method of selection has deliberately given it so wide a range, that it was obvious he could do no more than nibble at it. The result is a pleasant unexpectedness; you never know what you will meet next as you turn the page. Following

Mr. Belloc's 'The End of the Road,' and a short descriptive passage by Dame Ethel Smythe, we come suddenly upon H. M. Stanley's famous account of his meeting with Livingstone in the heart of Africa. "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" It is hardly less surprising to meet him here.

Kings of Commerce. By T. C. Bridges and H. Hessel Tiltman. Harrap. 7s. 6d.

IT is a well-recognized fact that to produce an interesting or even readable character sketch of a successful business man is one of the hardest tasks that can be put before any writer. Messrs. Bridges and Tiltman, however, have plunged into it with admirable courage, unbounded enthusiasm for their subject, and a good deal of unconscious humour. Their modest claim in the "foreword" that their book will be found "as thrilling as any tales of adventure" is not, perhaps, quite fulfilled; nor does the book work out altogether satisfactorily as a guide to "those in search of a career, to decide on a vocation in life." But the chapters are short—no less than twenty-five "kings of commerce" are dealt with in 288 brief pages—and when our interest wanes there are always the illustrations. Some of these are quite delightful, especially that of Sir Joseph Lyons seated at his easel.

A Chatto & Windus Miscellany, 1928. Chatto. 2s. 6d.

THIS nicely printed and illustrated little book is composed of extracts from books recently published or shortly to be published by the firm whose name it bears. It is a very good method of advertising, for it will make a handy and inexpensive Christmas present, and the extracts will mostly stimulate the reader's desire to know more of the books from which they are taken. The most interesting is an extract from the journal which Edward Gibbon kept while he was in camp with the Hampshire militia; bits of it have already been printed, and we know that "the captain of the Hampshire grenadiers has not been useless to the historian of the Roman Empire." Probably Gibbon was the only militia officer who amused his scanty leisure with Mr. Bonamy's "very solid" reflections upon the geographical errors occasioned by Alexander's historians, or M. de la Nauze's dissertation upon the ancient Roman Calendar; but many would sympathize with his charmingly naive remarks on Miss Chetwynd:—"This girl grows upon me. Tho' she has said nothing extraordinary, I am convinced she is sensible; perhaps it's an illusion of passion, perhaps an effect of that sympathy by which people of understanding discover one another from the merest trifles. I cannot yet find out who she is; she is no relation of Mrs. Blackwell, though a companion, and I am afraid an inferior one."

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NEW BOOKS AT A GLANCE

Notice under this heading does not preclude or prejudice subsequent review. Where a book is not yet published, the date of publication is added in parentheses.

The Way of Peace (Allan, 12s. 6d.), by Viscount Cecil, is not confined to thoughts on the work of the League of Nations; there are essays on the party system and on the special duty of Conservatism in regard to international peace.—When Mrs. Strachey's novel, *Shaken by the Wind*, appeared, it was suspected that it had a basis in fact: in *Religious Fanaticism* (Faber and Gwyer, 12s. 6d.) she gives us the basis, in the form partly of an account by herself of her grandmother's life and times and partly of documents by that believer. There is some very curious material here.—*For Lancelot Andrewes* (Faber and Gwyer, 6s.) is a selection of the essays written since 1920 by Mr. T. S. Eliot, made by the author to illustrate his position as classicist in literature, royalist in politics, Anglo-Catholic in religion.

The Coming Country. (By Sir Francis Young-husband. Murray. 7s. 6d.) An allegory, in which the spiritualization of Holm, a village in our own land, becomes the means of spiritualizing the world. "A Christ-country," the author believes, "is in process of development."—*John Bull Calling*. (By John Drinkwater. Sidgwick and Jackson. 1s.) A political parable in one act. An English, a Welsh and a Scottish surgeon meet in consultation over the case of John Bull. What follows, and the moral of it, must not here be revealed.—*The Cambridge Shorter Bible*. (Arranged by A. Nairne, T. R. Glover and Sir A. Quiller-Couch. Cambridge University Press. 7s. 6d.) Much fuller than the title might suggest; in fact, the Bible with the exception of the least interesting passages. The text is that of the Authorized Version, except in regard to Job and the Psalms. The customary order has been maintained.—*Oxford Poetry*, 1928. (By Clere Parsons and B. B. Oxford: Blackwell. 3s. 6d.) With a prefatory plea for better criticism. The editors are conscious of a reaction from the enthusiasm excited by Georgian poetry, and invite a more serious consideration of such work as they have collected.—*Apes and Parrots*. (By J. C. Squire. Herbert Jenkins. 6s.) An anthology of parodies, coming down to the present day, with examples of Mr. Max Beerbohm, Mr. E. V. Knox, Mr. Squire himself.—*Alma Mater*. (By Julian Hall. Kegan Paul. 2s. 6d.) The future of Oxford and Cambridge. The university of to-morrow is to be a research-station, to which a group of students will be permanently attached, and which will be linked with similar universities all over the world.—*Waysides and Byways*. (By A. L. Salmon. Foulis. 3s. 6d.) Stories and sketches by a writer who has before this done sensitive work in verse and prose.

Memoir of Lord Pentland. (By Lady Pentland. Methuen. 10s. 6d.) A biography of the former Secretary for Scotland and Governor of Madras, who began life in the Army.—*Anthony Comstock*. (By Heywood Broun and Margaret Leech. Wishart. 15s.) Comstock, a kind of male Mrs. Grundy, died of "overdoing it in a purity crusade." He had overdone all his life. But as a typical figure in American life he deserves study.—*Many Tales of many Cities*. (By Isidore De Lara. Hutchinson. 18s.) Musical and social recollections with a host of celebrated names in the index, but at first glance with a suggestion of cataloguing and book-making.—*Fyvie Castle*. (By A. M. W. Stirling. John Murray. 21s.) A series of sketches of the successive Lairds of Fyvie, with much attention to contemporary conditions.—*From Major to Minor*,

(By Major Kenneth Dawson. *Country Life*. 12s. 6d.) Instruction for fly-fishers, in the form of letters from an expert to a novice. Illustrated.

OTHER NEW BOOKS RECEIVED

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

THE COLLECTED PAPERS OF PAUL VINOGRADOFF. Memoir by the Right Hon. H. A. L. Fisher. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 2 vols. 42s.

HISTORY OF THE GREAT WAR. Naval Operations. Vol. IV. By Sir Henry Newbolt. Longmans. 2 vols. (text and map). 16s. and 5s.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE OLD HALL OF LINCOLN'S INN. By Sir John W. Simpson, K.B.E. The Dolphin Press.

WHEN LOVERS RULED RUSSIA. By V. Poliakoff. Appleton. 15s.

POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

WAGES. By Maurice Dobb. Cambridge University Press. 5s.

EDEN'S STATE OF THE POOR. By Sir Frederic Morton Eden. Routledge. 15s.

FICTION

THE COMPLETE NOVELS OF JANE AUSTEN. Introduction by J. C. Squire. Heinemann. 8s. 6d.

THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE. By M. A. Aldanov. Translated by A. E. Chamot. Knopf. 7s. 6d.

A KING OF SHADOWS. By Margaret Yeo. Sheed and Ward. 7s. 6d.

THE BALANCE. By J. Smellie Martin. Daniel. 7s. 6d.

GLIMPSES. By Corrie Denison. Scholartis Press. 7s. 6d.

(November 22.)

THE MAN WHO UNDERSTOOD WOMEN. By Charles James Fowler Wright. 7s. 6d. (November 19.)

THE BLUE PAROQUET. By Elizabeth York Miller. Brentano's. 7s. 6d.

THE BELLS OF SHOREDITCH. By Ethel Sidgwick. Sidgwick and Jackson. 7s. 6d.

DESERT BLADES. By Estore. Elkin Mathews and Marrot, Ltd. 7s. 6d.

THE ROBBER BAND. By Leonhard Frank. Davies. 7s. 6d.

MISCELLANEOUS

IN WEST OXFORD. Edited by Thomas W. Squires. Mowbray. Boards, 7s. 6d.; cloth, 10s. 6d.

AT CHELTENHAM SPA. By Edith Humphris and the late Captain E. C. Willoughby. Knopf. 10s. 6d.



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ACROSTICS

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 348

(Twelfth of our 25th Quarter)

(CLOSING DATE: First post, Thursday, November 22)

PASTIME NO LONGER SANCTIONED BY THE LAW.

PRACTICE APPROVED BY MR. BERNARD SHAW.

1. He'll find you, like enough, the needed sum.
2. Drowning I 'scaped—now, off my head must come!
3. A dish for gourmets of which Russia boasts.
4. Curtail a club still famous for its toasts.
5. We've learned to know him only by degrees.
6. Get this, and print your books whene'er you please.
7. You have it, if I err not, in your ear.
8. Best done, the saw says, when the sky is clear.
9. A dance no longer new, but yet not old.
10. Subordinate without the herald's gold.
11. Less than a score will rightly solve this light!
12. Red-hot, and shining in the darkest night.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 346

OF FIELDING'S MASTERPIECE WHO CAN ESCAPE THE SPELL?
FOX-HUNTER, MAN OF LAW, WE SEEM TO KNOW THEM WELL.

1. A knife that surgeons use, as you have surely heard.
2. Pluck out a pigeon's heart, but choose a nestling-bird.
3. From England's loveliest lake detach a Latin word.*
4. O, not with me can man transgress the laws of life!
5. 'Tis this that prompts the rash to draw the fatal knife.
6. My witch the tall king sought, disguised; came with him two.
7. Sure not to do or think what's meet to think or do.
8. Clip at each end the task youth learns from printed books.
9. Set up by Farmer Giles to guard his precious stooks.
10. What has been clearly said, repeating it again.
11. The town curtail which once held Scotland's proudest fane.
12. Bringing to life of one from whom the breath seemed fled.
13. May frequently be seen below a horse's head.

* In Gaelic, *dhù*.

Solution of Acrostic No. 346

S	calpe	L	1 His servants said to him,
U	u	Ab	Behold, there is a woman that hath
U	ils	Watera	familiar spirit at En-dor. And
I	mpunit	Y	Saul disguised himself, and put on
R	ag	E	other raiment, and he went, and
E	n-do	R ¹	two men with him, and they came
W	rongheade	D	to the woman by night.
IE	ss	On	1 Sam. xxviii. 7, 8.
S	care-cro	W	2 "The cathedral, the Lantern of
T	autologica	L	the North, as it was called, was
E	lg	In ²	once the most magnificent in
R	esuscitatio	N	Scotland. There remain some
N	ose-ba	G	splendid fragments only."

ACROSTIC No. 346.—The winner is "Dolmar," Mrs. E. Jacobson, 7 Onslow Crescent, S.W.7, who has selected as her prize 'The Life of Alcibiades,' by E. F. Benson, published by Benn, and reviewed in our columns on November 3, under the title, 'The Spoilt Boy of Greece.' Fifty-five other competitors chose this book, 15 named 'Crime,' etc.

ALSO CORRECT.—Armadale, A. de V. Blathwayt, Mrs. Rosa H. Boothroyd, Ceyx, J. R. Cripps, Dhualt, E. G. H., Ganesh, G. H. Hammond, Martha, Met, Peter, Hon. R. G. Talbot, Yendu.

ONE LIGHT WRONG.—Bolo, Mrs. Robert Brown, Mrs. J. Butler, M. de Burgh, Miss Carter, W. H. Carter, J. Chambers, Mrs. Alice Crooke, Ursula D'Ob, C. W. S. Ellis, G. M. Fowler, E. W. Fox, Glamis, Jeff, Jop, John Lennie, Margaret, Miss Moore, Pussy, Rand, G. H. Rodolph, Shorwell, Margarita Skene, St. Ives, Stucco, A. R. Wheeler, Mrs. Violet G. Wilson, Zyk.

TWO LIGHTS WRONG.—Astur, E. Barrett, Boskerris, Carlton, C. C. J., Chailey, Clam, Maud Crowther, D. L., Elizabeth, Falcon, Farsdon, Iago, W. P. James, Miss Kelly, Lillian, Madge, George W. Miller, M. I. R., H. de R. Bolo, N. O. Sellam, F. C. Orpet, Margaret Owen, Polamar, Remmap, Spyella, Sisyphus, A. T., Twyford, C. J. Warden, Capt. W. R. Wolseley. All others more.

For Light 8 Repetition and Recitation are accepted, though scarcely so good as Lesson.—Light 5. Rage prompts sudden acts of violence; Revenge has often been taken long after an injury has been received.—Light 8. Wrong-headed seems much better than Wayward, Wicked, etc., which are not accepted.

MARTHA, SISYPHUS, G. W. MILLER.—After reading your remarks I still consider Indefatigable better than Invincible, Impeccable, and Infallible. Indefatigable means "unremitting in effort." Such are those who send solutions of our Acrostics week by week. No one ever has answered, or is ever likely to answer, every Light correctly. Therefore no guesser of my riddles can be, even in this absurdly limited sense, invincible, infallible, or impeccable. (I should restrict the meaning of the last word to this: "Not liable to sin.")

E. BARRETT.—I hope to send you the four Leaflets about November 10.

OUR 25TH QUARTERLY COMPETITION.—After the Tenth Round the following lead:—Armadale (5 down); John Lennie, Peter, Yendu (6); Margaret, C. J. Warden, Captain Wolseley (7); Carlton, Martha (8); Dhualt, Madge, St. Ives (9); Miss Carter, Clam, G. W. Miller (10).

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RESERVE FUND	-	-	10,250,000
DEPOSITS, etc. (30 June, 1928)	-	-	317,950,894

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THE CITY

Lombard Street, Thursday

NOW that the speculative craze which has been so marked a characteristic of Stock Exchange activity during recent months shows signs of abatement, it is time to take fresh stock of the position. The points to be considered are, first, the factors that have been responsible for the Stock Exchange activity during recent months, and, secondly, what has occurred recently to change the position. Stock Exchange activity in the first instance was stimulated by the change in the ownership of wealth that has been going on during recent years, and was further encouraged by high taxation. Whereas in pre-war days much money was held in few hands, to-day we have little money held in many hands. This has resulted in a large number of people finding themselves for the first time with limited sums to invest. Some of them followed in the footsteps of their forefathers and used this money for what can be described as legitimate investment purposes. A large number, however, found little attraction in purchasing the fixed interest-bearing securities whose only recommendation was the fact that they were safe, and were attracted to more speculative counters in the hopes that they would select those which would yield them substantial capital appreciation. This tendency was augmented by the strain of heavy taxation which was found to reduce even further income derived from "Safety First" securities. Investors of all classes considered it more profitable to purchase shares regardless of their yield, hoping to be able to sell at a higher price, which appreciation they could consider as income with the added advantage that it was not taxable.

These are the main factors which turned the public attention to semi-speculative and speculative investments on the Stock Exchange. Unfortunately, in addition, the trade of the country was bad, and money which should normally have been used in industry was available for stock and share transactions. The ball having started rolling received impetus by the fact that certain counters registered substantial and justifiable rises. It was freely advertised in the Press how much money had been made, which increased the ardour of the new race of investors. While this was going on, a marked change was taking place in the policy of trust companies and finance houses, who gradually changed their long-existent policy of investing their funds in debentures and preference shares and took substantial interest in the ordinary shares of approved industrial concerns, and by so doing caused prices to rise. The activity on the Stock Exchange naturally did not pass unnoticed by issuing houses, who embraced the golden opportunity of obtaining money on favourable terms for the industries in which they were interested in the form of new issues. During recent months, however, their ranks were swollen by new issuing houses who seemed to consider the Alpha and Omega of their business was to make issues, and sell such shares as they received for their services, with no regard either to the future of the business concerned or to the market in its shares. The result was inevitable and was forecasted in these notes some months ago. Investors are finding that their surplus money is locked up in shares of new

ventures which they are either unable to sell or else can only sell at a sacrifice.

And now what of the future? The vast volume of investors will still wish to purchase stocks and shares, and although the trade of the country is believed to be gradually improving, there is yet available ample funds for Stock Exchange transactions. Although many of the new issues made may never reach the high premiums to which they were raised when dealings started, there are undoubtedly a large number which to-day stand at levels which can be deemed attractive, and from which they will gradually rise as their intrinsic merit becomes proved. In these circumstances, once investors have got over their present attack of indigestion, the volume of business on the Stock Exchange will increase. Those responsible for new issues will be much more cautious, with the result that their number will be greatly decreased.

An uncertain factor is the position in America, where boomlike conditions have existed for so long that one feels bound to forecast a break. If this is realized, its effects may react on the London market. At the same time there is always the possibility that American investors, alarmed at the high level of their own prices, will turn their attention more and more to attractive counters in London.

Stock markets are dull and the volume of business has decidedly decreased, prices may fall still further, and the volume of business may show further contraction. At the same time Stock Exchange activity is by no means over, and although it is difficult to say exactly when the upward movement will restart or whether, when it does restart, it will be general or merely in specialized counters, there seems no valid reason to assume that the Stock markets will sink back into a state of depressed lethargy for any considerable time.

THE OIL OUTLOOK

Holders of Oil shares should be encouraged by the perusal of Sir John Cadman's remarks at the meeting of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company held last week. He pointed out that the world's consumption, more particularly of motor spirit, continued steadily and persistently to advance. As regards the Anglo-Persian Company, he stated that the influence upon the Company's revenues of increased turnover and important economies were already becoming cumulative in effect, and provided that the directors were right in believing that prices have touched low-water mark, they were justified in hoping that the close of the current period should be marked by not unsatisfactory results and that the succeeding year might inaugurate an era of steadily expanding profits. These remarks are applicable to other Oil Companies in addition to Anglo-Persian, and their significance should not be overlooked. I have frequently drawn attention to Anglo-Persian shares, while I have often referred to the merits of Shells as a permanent investment; I emphasize this now. Another Oil Company whose shares appear worthy of attention is Trinidad Leaseholds. Its recently issued report for the year ended June 30, 1928, discloses a sound position.

CORONA WINES

Recently the public were invited to subscribe for 760,000 shares of 5s. each in Corona Wines, Ltd. The prospectus dealing with this issue showed that the new company was taking over, as a going concern, the works of the original company and was

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already earning substantial profits. Despite the fact that it has not been long in existence, the demand for its products is so great that it has been unable to cope with them, and a new factory has been acquired which will be working within the next few months, thus enabling the production to be very largely increased. This production of wines in Great Britain is an entirely new industry, but it appears to be growing rapidly. A leading firm of stockbrokers in dealing with this subject in one of their periodically well-informed and interesting letters to their clients drew attention to the fact that the consumption of British wines increased from 243,745 gallons for the six months ending June, 1927, to 1,266,376 gallons for the six months ending June, 1928. The Corona Wine Company appears to be in a promising position to participate in the prosperity consequent on the expansion of this new industry, and in these circumstances the 5s. shares of this Company appear an interesting investment at the present level.

CAPE ASBESTOS

The Cape Asbestos Company appears to be doing extremely well and attention is drawn to the 5% cumulative participating preference shares which possess considerable attractions. These preference shares, of which there are 90,000 issued, are entitled to a cumulative dividend of 5% and to an amount equivalent to the dividend on the Ordinary shares. For the year ended December 31 last, 17½% was paid on these preference shares and 12½% on the ordinary shares. It is suggested that this distribution will be increased for the current year and therefore those who purchase these participating preference shares at the present level, which is in the neighbourhood of 66s., should find substantial capital appreciation accruing to them by the time the report is issued in June of next year.

DENNIS BROTHERS

The directors of Dennis Brothers, the world-famed manufacturers of commercial vehicles and fire engines, have issued their figures for the year ended September 30 last, which show a record profit. They reach a total of £360,839, which compares with £87,285 for 1923, and is some £25,000 up on the net profits of last year. It is suggested that holders of Dennis Brothers shares should most certainly retain their interest.

GILT-EDGED

The recent strength of the Gilt-Edged Market can be attributed to the fact that a fresh conversion offer to deal with next year's maturities is expected to be made between now and the end of the year.

NEWTONIA WALLPAPERS

Dealings will probably start on Wednesday of next week in the 4s. ordinary shares of Newtonia Wallpapers, Limited. The past record of this company is good and its future prospects appear promising.

GILSTRAP EARP

The directors of Gilstrap Earp and Company, the well-known maltsters, have declared a dividend of 17½% on their 5s. ordinary shares, which can be deemed a very satisfactory distribution.

DUOPHONES

The directors of the Duophone and Unbreakable Record Company have issued an invitation to their shareholders and to the Press to visit their record-manufacturing works at New Malden on the 22nd and 23rd of this month. They claim that this is one of the biggest record-producing factories in this country, and suggest that as a result of such a visit the progress made by this company will be more fully appreciated. In view of the substantial fall that has occurred in these shares, this invitation should reassure shareholders.

TAURUS

Company Meeting

GRAMOPHONE COMPANY

CONTINUAL GROWTH OF SALES

The ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of the Gramophone Company, Ltd., was held on November 14 at the Hotel Victoria, London.

Mr. E. Trevor Williams (chairman) presided, and, in moving the adoption of the report, said: "Ladies and Gentlemen. The balance-sheet and accounts which are before you are truly magnificent. When this Company was registered in the year 1900, those of us who were then connected with it little contemplated the possibility of profits being earned in any one year of well over a million pounds.

The position of your Company to-day, with its £1,100,000 profit, is accounted for by the fact that we have, with our carefully built-up resources, been able quickly to take full advantage of every advance in the science, and by rapid expansion of our manufacturing facilities to be in a position, step by step, to meet this insistent demand of the public.

BIG ADVANCE IN PROFITS

Our trading profit for the year, after allowing for income tax, is £1,132,413, being £351,858 in excess of the previous year's figure of £780,555. This of course is by far the highest figure we have attained in our history. It does not, however, appear to be going to remain unchallenged.

Deducting Debenture service, Directors' fees and Preference Dividend, and adding the amount brought in from last account, we have a balance of £1,692,925 to be dealt with.

In May we paid an interim dividend of 10 per cent. on the Ordinary shares, and your Directors now recommend a final dividend of 45 per cent., making 55 per cent. for the year, absorbing in all £650,278.

This amount is practically 60 per cent. of the net profit, and that is the proportion of distribution to earnings which your Directors have always endeavoured to preserve—it has sometimes been less, and, on occasions, of necessity more—but the average distribution over 28 years has been just about 61 per cent.

It is upon such a basis of distribution that the great industries of this country have been built up, and, as I have already said, it is that policy of conservation of resources which has brought your Company into its present position of great strength and prosperity. In this connection it must not be forgotten that when our partly paid shares are fully paid, a 55 per cent. dividend will require £880,000, which would mean 80 per cent. of this year's profits.

LIQUID RESERVES

The resulting carry-forward to next account is £1,033,646. This certainly seems a large amount in comparison with last year's figure of £593,827, but we have no general reserve, as such, for emergencies, and more than ever to-day have we got to be prepared for quick action, not only for expansion and seizure of opportunities which are looming large in the not far distant future, but we have to be prepared to meet fierce competition financed by an apparently bottomless public purse.

SALES

Last year when comparing the sales for July, August, September and October, I said that the sales for the then current year of 1927 were as largely in excess of those of 1926 as were the sales of 1926 in excess of those of 1925. This statement has in some quarters been unfortunately misconstrued. The profits for the year ending June 27 being double those of the previous year, it was assumed that for the year just ended we were doubling the profit made for the year ending June 27. Such, however, is not the meaning of the statement, which is quite explicit. If the first two years are represented by 10 and 20, 20 is certainly double 10, but under the statement the third year would be 30 and not 40, the increase of 20 over 10 being 10 and not 20.

The Report tells you that the sales show increases in volume from month to month. That was so throughout the year and persists to-day—long may it so continue. The sales for the first four months of the current year show an increase over the corresponding months of last year of approximately 25 per cent.

The time is not far distant when the partly-paid shares will become fully paid, and if our prosperity continues your Directors will be able to consider a share distribution so as to increase the capital to a figure showing a closer representation of our tangible assets.

The Report was unanimously adopted amid applause.

THE SUDAN PLANTATIONS SYNDICATE

THE TWENTY-FIRST ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of the Sudan Plantations Syndicate, Ltd., was held on November 14 at Winchester House, London, E.C.

Mr. Alexander MacIntyre (the chairman of the company), who presided, said that he joined the Sudan Plantations, Ltd., twenty-two years ago, and although he had served it as Civil Engineer, Manager, and Managing Director that was the first time he had the pleasure of attending an annual meeting and had the privilege of addressing the shareholders. He felt that however well he might carry out his duties as Chairman, it would be difficult to fill the place vacated by so capable and far-seeing a man as their late chairman, Mr. Eckstein. He was particularly glad that Mr. Eckstein had agreed to remain on the board as Deputy-Chairman, and that the Syndicate would still have the benefit of his wide experience and advice.

The company's financial position remained a strong one, which was necessary in view of the big crops they were now producing and which they had to finance. The gross profit was £833,000, or £69,000 less than the previous year, whilst the divisible net profit was within a few pounds of last year's figure of £587,000. They proposed to pay a final dividend of 15 per cent., making in all 25 per cent. for the year.

During the past season they had at Zeidab approximately 5,100 feddans under cotton, they picked 16,458 kantars and shipped 3,330 bales, all of which were sold at very satisfactory prices. In addition 1,552 tons of seed were shipped, and also sold at satisfactory prices. In the Gezira they had under cotton, 105,587 feddans; durra, 52,902 feddans; lubia, 55,331 feddans. They picked 347,402 kantars of cotton, and shipped 76,900 bales of cotton and 33,703 tons of cotton seed.

Turning to the present season, they had under cotton at Zeidab approximately 5,026 feddans, and the crop promised to be a good one. They had now picked 17,435 kantars and shipped 1,000 bales. In the Gezira they now had under cotton 131,351 feddans; durra, 65,651 feddans; lubia, 54,580 feddans. Reports just received by cable indicated that the crop on the whole was quite promising.

The development work for the extension areas was well ahead, and they hoped to have the development canalisation and buildings for the whole concession area of 465,000 feddans completed by July, 1929, and if the Government were able to complete their part of the undertaking by supplying the necessary water for this area they would have 155,000 feddans under cotton next year.

The report and accounts were adopted unanimously.

THE

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November, 1928.

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Correspondence—Italy and France—The Death Penalty—Armistice Day and Pacifism.

Current Comments

Notes from Paris

GEORGE ADAM

Mr. Lloyd George and the Liberal Party

AUSTIN HOPKINSON, M.P.

The League of Nations

BERNARD SHAW

The Way of Peace

J. O. P. BLAND

The Mythical Transfer Problem

GEORGE P. AULD

Mr. Chapman and Divorce

The Rt. Hon. LORD HUGH CECIL, M.P.

Europe Looks at Vilno

AUGUR

Burma's Relation to India

Major C. M. ENRIQUEZ, F.R.G.S.

Capital Punishment

W. G. CARLTON HALL

The Chandler's Shop

CHARLES PENDRILL

"Says Sergeant Murphy"

A. P. GARLAND

The Songs of Frederick Delius

HERMON OULD

Book Reviews

STORIES { Retribution

JOHN C. MOORE

The Revenant SAMUEL SCOVILLE, Jr.

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